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Cover image: David Mason

The smoke from our bonfire night blaze-up is still drifting past the study window as I pen these words – so it seems a bit odd to be thinking about Christmas. That said, the John Lewis ad is running non-stop on the telly and the Aldi Christmas Food leaflet is out, so we must be getting close, I suppose!

As ever, we have tried to find as many fun and useful gifts for game shooters, foxers, gundog handlers and wildfowlers with 10 pages crammed with ideas, starting on p37. So get your shopping list planned now.

Elsewhere, we have Andy Crow on pigeons, I've been finding rough-shooting paradise in the wild west of England, and Mike Yardley is putting the Krieghoff Parours through its paces.

It's very nearly been five years since I wrote my first ever editorial on this page. Seems like only yesterday, to be honest, but a glance in the mirror tells me otherwise. Having launched a new magazine recently, *Rifle Shooter*, and expanded our team to welcome new staff writer, Emily Damment, we've had a bit of a reshuffle at *Sporting Shooter* Towers. As of next month, Rebecca Green will be taking over these editorial reins.

Rebecca has been a stalwart of the magazine for as long as I have been here. It's safe to say that without her gentle coaxing, cajoling and careful management, not all of these pages would get filled every month and I am thrilled to be able to place the magazine in her capable hands.

When she isn't working her beloved cocker spaniels she is likely to be out in pursuit of deer or finding new and delicious ways of transforming wild game into gourmet fare. I know that her passion for the countryside and love of shooting will continue to shine through every month.

I hope it is fair to say that producing *Sporting Shooter* has always been a collaborative process, between the members of the editorial team, the contributors and of course, you as readers. So, as ever, if there is anything you want to see featured in the magazine, please do drop us a line.

In the meantime, I'd like to wish Rebecca the very best of luck, and you all a very happy Christmas.

DOM HOLTAM
Editor-in-chief





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Animal welfare groups fall from grace

by Emily Damment

A report and accompanying video released by the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS), titled *The Intensification of Grouse Moor Management in Scotland*, has been openly contradicted and exposed as propaganda by a scientific review from Scottish National Heritage.

BASC has condemned the report, partly written by Green Party activist Andy Wightman, as unbalanced, selective, misleading, inaccurate and unsupported. The report makes unreferenced, sweeping statements based on a single case or no evidence at all, downplays the socio-economic benefits of grouse shooting to upland communities, and ignores the benefits of grouse moor management.

Director of BASC Scotland, Dr Colin Shedden advised: "If you want to know what's really happening on Scottish grouse moors, ignore extremists such as the League Against Cruel Sports and look at the facts. These are very sensibly set out in *A Review of Sustainable Moorland Management*, the report produced by the Scientific Advisory Committee of Scottish Natural Heritage."

The BASC Council member representing Scotland, Alan Balfour said: "Setting a good policy depends upon accurate evidence and

responsible debate. Producing a report intended to deceive policy makers and the public is dishonest and a mark of how irresponsible extremist bodies such as the League Against Cruel Sports can be."

The counter-review was published in the same month that LACS were dealt another blow, again relating to false allegations. Lee Martin, countryman for the Middleton hunt, was found guilty of interfering with a badger set at Scarborough Magistrates' Court on 10 February. He denied the charges from the start and, in October, launched and won an appeal, eventually being exonerated of the charges on 15 October.

Countryside Alliance chief executive, Tim Bonner said: "This has been a huge waste of time and tax payers' money by LACS. The CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] needs to carefully consider whether they should bring prosecutions on the evidence of paid animal rights activists."

The two incidents are not isolated and seem to support several recently published articles in the non-shooting press, which imply that the extremist views and bully tactics used in prosecutions are alienating the general public from animal welfare organisations.



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

The Met forms advisory panel to improve shooters' service

The Metropolitan Police has formed an advisory panel with the aim of improving cooperation and communication between the police and shooting organisations, such as BASC, and to enhance the service they provide to the shooting community.

It will also provide the police with access to a repository of expertise in the key shooting disciplines, and a channel of communication via which shooting organisations can be informed of any new developments or points of interest from the police's perspective.

The Independent Advisory group (IAG) of the Met's firearms enquiry team will hold meetings every six months. Mike Eveleigh, from the BASC firearms team, attended the first meeting. He said: "This is a great development. Our relationship with the Metropolitan Police firearms enquiry team has been improving steadily over the past few years. This now formalises that relationship and involves other shooting organisations who have expertise in areas such as target shooting and firearm collecting."



PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN

Wildlife Law review receives mixed response from NGO

The NGO has responded with a cautious welcome to the publication of a report by the Law Commission on modernising the legal framework for protecting and managing wildlife. The NGO has warned against rushing to replace existing wildlife laws, after finding both positive and negative aspects to the report.

The Law Commission's findings, published in the report titled *Wildlife Law*, seek to simplify and consolidate almost all existing wildlife law; the scope of the review is wide-ranging and encompasses everything from trapping and quarry lists, to the possession of gamebird eggs. It stems from the public consultation that was

launched in November 2012. The report and associated draft bill, when combined, run to more than 560 pages cover to cover – an indication of the many areas covered and the level of detail involved.

Despite finding many of their own proposals within the report, there were also areas that the NGO felt less positively towards, and have voiced fears that a knee-jerk rush towards adopting a subsequent new legal framework would be counterproductive. They have warned against merely swapping one set of shortcomings for another.

Chairman of the NGO, Lindsay Waddell said:

"The NGO has been closely involved with this process since it began in 2012. There is, of course, a need to simplify – and improve – upon the mishmash of wildlife law that's now on the statute book, but it is important that any new consolidated legislation would not make our jobs tougher and our ability to conserve wildlife more problematic.

"The NGO is urging all parties to engage in a sensible period of reflection and discussion to consider properly the full ramifications for game and wildlife. A knee-jerk, headlong rush to law would be counterproductive. The devil is very much in the detail."



GWCT Shoot Walk at Grange Farm

Earlier this year, on a lovely summer's evening, the GWCT Oxfordshire Committee held a shoot walk at the 600-acre Grange Farm in Godington, kindly hosted by 2015 Cotswold Grey Partridge Trophy winner, Nigel Oakey and his wife, Penny, together with GWCT advisor, Mike Swan. Richard Leach from Bright Seeds was in attendance to showcase his company's products.

The farm is in the HLS scheme and participates in the grey partridge count scheme and has increased its wild grey population every year since

2010. Over 45 guests were treated to an interesting and varied walk across the farm with frequent stops, where Nigel and his gamekeeper, Colin Jeacock, explained how the shoot works. At each stop there were questions asked, such as how managing farmland for grey partridges, pheasants and other wildlife works alongside the need to profitably farm the land and run a successful shoot. In between stops, there was a constant chatter, with people discussing shooting and wildlife in general.

Back at the farmhouse everyone expressed their appreciation to Nigel and Colin for a great evening and the event finished off with great food prepared and served by Penny, her sister Victoria and Colin's partner, Morag Reeves, who is the joint keeper. The GWCT Oxfordshire Committee would like to thank all involved for making it a very special evening.

The GWCT holds a variety of events throughout the year to help raise awareness of the benefits of shooting.



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Team GB shooting squad announced

The British Olympic Association (BOA) has announced the six shooters that will represent Team GB at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

Making their Olympic debuts at Rio will be shotgun shooters Amber Hill and Tim Kneale, alongside Steve Scott and Elena Allen, both participating in their second Olympics, and Ed Ling, for whom Rio will be his third Olympic appearance. The sixth member of the team is Jen McIntosh, who will compete in the Women's 50m Three Positions.

The team poses a formidable presence with a host of achievements. Steve Scott is a double Commonwealth gold medallist and won Gold at the recent ISSF World Cup; Tim Kneale holds the current world record in the Men's Double Trap and took Bronze at the Commonwealth Games; Ling is world silver medallist and two-time Olympian; Amber Hill is the youngest ever Skeet World Cup gold medallist and recently won Gold alongside Scott at the ISSF World Cup; Jen McIntosh has taken two Golds, a Silver and two Bronzes at Commonwealth Games' competitions; and Elena Allen is a Commonwealth Games

silver medallist and two-time Olympian.

Sporting Shooter will be updating you on their progress as Rio 2016 draws closer.



TEAM BREAKDOWN

Amber Hill: Women's Skeet

Elena Allen: Women's Skeet

Ed Ling: Men's Trap

Jen McIntosh: Women's 50m Three Positions

Steve Scott: Men's Double Trap

Tim Kneale: Men's Double Trap

Woodcock decline prompts warning from SGA

The Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) is asking shooters to exercise restraint when shooting woodcock this year, following a report that the elusive birds are in decline.

The request comes as a result of recommendations from conservationists, whose most recent survey, in 2013, showed a 29% fall in the woodcock population since 2003.

Shooters are being asked to leave any shooting of woodcock until late November, giving the resident breeding woodcock a chance to migrate to warmer parts, and the higher numbers of wintering woodcock to arrive from Scandinavia, Russia and the Baltics.

Chairman of The SGA, Alex Hogg said: "GWCT has done a lot of scientific work regarding these birds and we agree with their guidance that shoots should leave it as late as possible in November before shooting woodcock.

"It is sensible to minimise the pressure on the birds as much as possible to ensure the resident breeders

get the best chance for future years and we will be encouraging our members to take these steps going forward.

"Shooters have always been receptive to conservation guidance, as was shown with black grouse, and those we have spoken to are happy to support the later start to help the resident woodcock."



BASC and CA urge compliance with lead laws

BASC and the Countryside Alliance are urging all shooters to comply with the laws on the use of lead ammunition. They warn that a failure to comply could result not only in personal prosecution, but in yet more laws being put in place to reinforce the current ones, restricting the sport further.

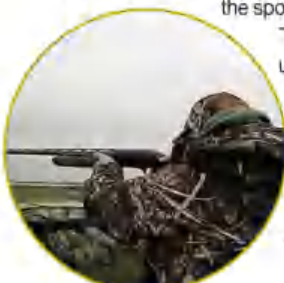
The law is simple; it is illegal to use lead ammunition to shoot wildfowl. Shooters who fail to comply risk a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £1,000.

BASC chairman, Alan Jarrett commented: "Non-compliance

lays us open to claims that current regulation is inadequate. It should be unacceptable to all of us who obey the law that others put our shooting in jeopardy by ignoring it. As we are prepared to crack down on the selfishness or stupidity of others when it comes to safety, we should also ensure that others around us are complying with the law on lead ammunition."

Tim Bonner, chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, added: "We support the zero tolerance shown by wildfowling clubs, and are confident that they are 100% compliant. We want to see that example reflected by the whole shooting community."

Sporting Shooter urges all our readers to stick to the law and maintain the good name and integrity of our sport.



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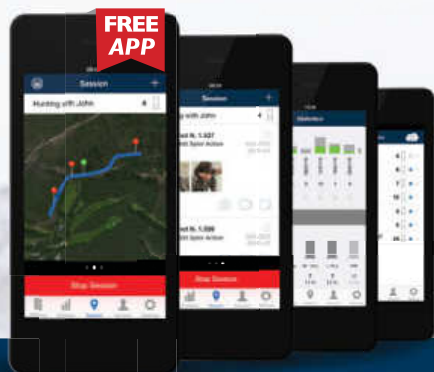




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Get out for the count in February

Plans are well underway for the GWCT's 2016 Big Farmland Bird Count and the GWCT is hoping to get even more farmers, gamekeepers and landowners out with their binoculars and notepads to record the birds on their farms. The count will take place from 6-14 February next year.

The principle – spending 30 minutes counting birds on one area of a farm – hasn't changed, but in 2016 the GWCT is working on how it can provide feedback to everyone who takes part, including a brief report outlining what birds have been seen and providing some simple tips on how to provide more help for those birds throughout the year.

In 2015, 12 Farmland Bird Identification Days took place. The response was fantastic, so the plan is for 20 similar events across the country in January 2016. Details will be confirmed on 14 December, but you can register to receive more information.

In 2015, over 1,000 people took part, spotting 126 different species living on farmland. These results helped to promote the great work that many keepers and landowners do to support birds through the winter.

The GWCT appeared on over 60 local and regional radio stations to talk about farmers providing wild seed mixes, managing hedges,



PICTURE: DAVID KAJER

woodland, field margins and field corners for wildlife while working hard in the middle of fields to produce the food we need.

The aim this year is to get over 5,000 people taking part. Sign up online at www.gwct.org.uk

Game to Eat Student Chef of the Year announced

The title of 'Game to Eat Student Chef of the Year 2015' has been bagged by Jack Gates, a student from North Herefordshire College.

Jack took the title with his whole roasted partridge which was accompanied by beetroot three ways, a mushroom duxelle, pickled wild mushrooms, red-vein sorrel and a red wine jus.

The competition, now in its fourth year, was held on 27 October at Kingsway College, London, and saw 12 aspiring young chefs compete to win

the title, plus £250 cookery equipment vouchers, a week's work placement at The Ledbury, and an engraved Flint and Flame knife.

Chairman of the judging panel, and Game to Eat consultant chef, Lee Maycock said: "Jack's dish was perfectly executed and the seasoning was faultless. The partridge was cooked to perfection, and under the time restrictions, he truly excelled."

Making up the rest of the judging panel was

top game chef and owner of Café Spice Namaste, Cyrus Todiwala, and last year's winner, Iwona Czerniak.

A member of the Game to Eat campaign, Jack Knott said: "This year's competition was fierce, we had more nominations than ever before and the standard of the 12 finalists was phenomenal. It really was anyone's competition. It is very good news for the future that these young chefs have such mastery of game cookery."



PICTURE: GAME TO EAT

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CONGRATU

Brian Hughes who found Lucinda Lapwing on p64 of the November issue. See p112 for a list of other successful creature finders.

PICTURE: DAVID JASON

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Playing it safe

Andy proves that sometimes it's better to err on the side of caution to ensure a successful day

Decisions, decisions. Even when you turn up to a field covered in birds, picking the right place to set up is not always straightforward. It's why we are parked up a few hundred yards from the action area so that Andy can assess his options.

The field in question was a wheat field and the outer edge didn't ripen up in time to get harvested with the rest of the field. As a result, a few acres ended up getting chopped in and providing an unexpected late autumn bounty for the local woodpigeon population. Our vantage point gives us a view out towards the glass castles of London's Docklands, so more than a few 'city commuters' join the feast.

We see several hundred birds when we turn up

and most are keen to return when clapped off. It isn't the earliest of starts – getting on for 10 o'clock – and Andy feels that early afternoon will be 'prime time' for feeding birds.

Finally, Andy makes a decision. It is his 'B' choice but, ultimately, the proximity of a nearby footpath makes his mind up. "I'd rather miss out on a few birds than risk upsetting a walker and causing any grief for the landowner. Even though we wouldn't be breaking any laws, it's better to play it cautious in some instances. And I still think we will get a decent day's shooting."

Andy pulls his hide a few yards out from the hedge line to give himself better visibility and shooting options for birds approaching from

behind. "If I was tucked right under the hedge, I'd struggle to see anything cutting in from the rear and some overhead shots would be limited, too."

A few hazel branches trimmed from the nearby shaw give the bush hide its required height to allow Andy's standing shooting position, and then it's time to break open the cartridges and make ready.

Andy is getting on well with his new Beretta A400 after getting it set up to his satisfaction. He reckons his clay shooting scores are higher than they've been for many years, and his confidence in the hide is certainly evident as he picks a long crosser. "It took a little while to get the adjustment shims just right for me and to get used to the slightly longer barrel. But I am really pleased with how I shoot it now." And it looks like he has got some new blue covers for his CENS ear protection in order to complement the snazzy anodizing. Who says that pigeon shooters aren't fashionistas...

A whirly out left provides movement, but Andy gets the impression that it is going to put off as many birds as it attracts. "I have a flapper in the centre of the pattern and I'll probably alternate between the two and see which one works best to start with."

Hawthorn berries fill the pigeons' crops, so Andy knows they'll be feasting on wheat later on



TOP TIP

A remote flapper gives you better control when birds are approaching than one on a timer.



The A400 Beretta took some getting used to, but Andy is reaping the benefits now

'Ruby is enjoying her day in the hide, marking a very long bird that drops way into the woods and returning moments later looking very pleased'

There aren't loads of chances to start off with, and those that do flight by are rangy. It's all too easy to tackle longer shots and miss, and then get into a negative mindset. Andy is no different. "I always like to get a couple of birds shot cleanly at the start. If you do miss a couple when chances are few and far between, it can knock your confidence. Better to wait for a shot you are confident of and get into the groove steadily."

Quite a few birds sneak in behind and, with the wind starting to pick up, make for some challenging targets. Andy has white, painted cradles to add shot birds to the pattern. "Green ones are too easy to lose, whereas the white stands out in any crop or stubble."

There are more birds heading to the corner that Andy had initially fancied setting up in and he stares wistfully in that direction, but he sticks with his decision, instead swapping the whirly for the FF5 flapper.

"I always check the crops of birds to see what they are eating and most of the ones I have shot so far have been eating hawthorn berries. None of them have any wheat in their crops, so my guess is that they will feed here a little later."

Ruby is enjoying her day in the hide, marking a very long bird that drops way into the woods and returning a few moments later looking very pleased with herself.

As predicted, the action does warm up as the day progresses but without ever getting 'hot'. Some birds decoy nicely; others flare away from both whirly and flapper, and with the wind making the pigeons hard to hit, Andy works hard to bag just under 100 birds. Less than he had hoped for but a decent day out nonetheless.

And a few days after our photo shoot, he gets an invite to join a couple of other seriously experienced pigeon shooters on a small stubble field in a neighbouring county.

"It was one of those days when they really wanted it and the way the Guns were set up, everybody had some decent shooting. Between the three of us we got over 700 birds. A real red-letter day. I have to say, my Flightline flapper worked really well – often turning birds back that were headed on the wrong line for my hide.

"The ability to control the flapping remotely is a real bonus, and let's just say that the other Guns were enquiring about getting one by the end of the day." ■

Andy adds shot birds to the pattern using cradles



TOP TIP
Painting your cradles white will stop you from losing them when packing up in fading light.

Ruby returns with her prize





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WEST IS BEST

From wildfowl to woodcock, Cornwall offers a veritable heaven for shooting fans. Dom Holtam has a memorable day with Solognac's Mission Test team

What would your perfect shooting day look like? Standing at the bottom of a deep valley waiting for world-class pheasants? Dawn in a high seat? The salty tang of the foreshore and the sound of goose music? A hard slog through ancient woodland in pursuit of the wonderful woodcock? What if I told you that you can have the lot?

It's a wild morning a mile or two inland from the coast, not too far from Saltash. Rain is lashing in through the darkness, wind tearing at the hide. I'm tucked in a hedgerow with a Hungarian gentleman and a British colleague. Hidden in the brambles alongside is an old mate, Scott Milne. I first met him when he guided me for a Cornish stag on our Ferrari Macnab adventure, but as head honcho at Cornish Country Pursuits, he has

plenty more strings to his sporting bow.

This morning we are waiting for Canada geese to come in on the maize stubbles. Scott has another guide spotting the birds lower down the valley and flagging them off another maize stubble. We can hear the muffled crackle of the radio telling us birds are on the way, then the distant honking as a skein beats in to our positions and makes for the decoys as Scott works his goose call.

Scott blows a whistle as a signal for both hides to rise up and shoot to try and ensure we all have the best chance of some sport – an 'eager beaver' letting rip before the geese come into range would ruin it for everybody else.

The plan works well as we shoot in some kind of unison. I manage to trim a brace from the first

skein and no sooner have we tidied the dead birds up than another skein swoop in low from our right.

Another group surprises everybody by circling in behind, while yet another phalanx hug the contours of the hillside to cheat the wind and drive in fast from the left-hand side.

The big birds are deceptively fast with the wind up their tails, at odds with the languid wingbeats and apparent lack of effort.

The flight is fantastic, the action almost non-stop for an hour until Scott decides we have had our fun and that we ought to get off the field to give the birds a chance to get in and feed.

Around 30 birds are picked and the guys are buzzing. There's little to rival the excitement of a big 'V' coming in, and for many it is the first time they have sampled this sport.



‘Cornwall is a bit of a hidden gem. It’s almost unbeatable. And for most folk, it’s a heck of a lot closer than heading up to the Scottish Highlands’

It's the taking part that counts: the pleasure of this kind of shooting is to be found in the experience, rather than the size of the bag



There is much excitement after a magnificent morning flight. The guys from Solognac are grinning – it's the perfect start to their Mission Test. This is an opportunity to put their latest gear through its paces in the field over a period of several days – stalking, wildfowling and rough shooting in some tough conditions and in wild weather. It is a chance for the team to really understand how the kit performs, and also to get feedback from a number of professional hunting journalists.

The sport has been organised by Owen Beardsmore from Cervus UK. He has worked with Scott and his guides for many years, and the sheer variety of sport keeps his clients coming back. "Cornwall is a bit of hidden gem, really," explains Owen. "If you think about just what it can offer, it's almost unbeatable. And for most folk, it's a heck of a lot closer than heading up to the Scottish Highlands."

Solognac's Silent Hunt certification guarantees fabrics are low noise



It's beautiful countryside, too. Deep valleys, thick woodland and rolling pasture. The wooded gullies are ideal for woodcock and that is our next target species. Although an unseasonably mild early part to the winter means there aren't a huge number of migrant birds yet, the sport can be phenomenal here after a hard spell of cold weather. And *la bécasse* is as highly prized by French shooters as it is here.

I love this type of shooting. It is hard work and the bag is measured not by size but by the satisfaction in getting it. Slogging up steep hills, crashing through brambles and plugging through glutinous mud is part and parcel of the experience.

You earn your birds here. The Gun line is broken up by dogs and beaters. Sometimes we walk the cover through; other times half the Guns will stand while a cover is driven to them. It is varied and interesting, and you never know what is coming your way.

The occasional cry of "Woodcock!" gets your heartbeat racing and if you are lucky, the brown ghost will flash through cover within range.

We have a fantastic final drive with plenty of pheasants that give the standing Guns some fabulous shooting, offering high driven birds that would grace any top estate. On other bits of ground we raise a number of woodcock from thickets and stream beds. We even shoot the odd one! There are some cracking pigeons and the odd corvid thrown in for good measure.

The afternoon/evening rotation is another split. Those who shot pigeons in the morning will flight ducks into some nearby ponds, while my group will switch from shotgun to rifle and head out after roe and red deer.

There are some enormous stags in this part of the world and Scott explains that if a hunter wants to shoot one he can... for a price. But we are mainly after hinds.

'Sometimes we walk the cover through; other times half the Guns will stand while a cover is driven to them. It is varied and interesting'

I'm given my directions and head off to a familiar high seat – the exact same one I sat in on the first morning of my south-to-north Macnab adventure. It is a foot-stalk to reach the high seat, through the early evening light, across rolling pasture and woodland edge.

My vantage point is a lovely spot, nestled among the gorse and overlooking a wooded valley. It's a steep gully, though, and Scott's last piece of advice before I set out was "Try and shoot a small one if you can!" Dragging a 500lb animal up this slope would not be much fun...

The light fades without a deer in the bag, but that doesn't for one second diminish my enjoyment. It's been as close to the perfect day for a rough shooter (and I certainly fit that description!) as you could imagine. Stunning scenery, a varied bag, superb, exciting sport and some memorably testing shots.

If you have never considered a visit to this part of the world then you might want to make plans for 2016. Cornwall really does have a tremendous variety of sport, from ferreting to stag stalking, wildfowling to walked-up days. ■

For more information, visit:
www.cervus-uk.co.uk
www.cornishcountrypursuits.com



SOLOGNAC

You are probably not very familiar with the Solognac brand, but that is about to change. Despite a low profile in the UK, it seems a great choice for shooters. After a few days of serious use in some of Cornwall's filthiest early winter weather, I was hugely impressed by the quality and the price point. From lightweight, waterproof hunting boots from under £65, to high-spec jackets at well under £100, there is plenty of choice and seriously competitive pricing.

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The team behind the brand are passionate hunters and outdoors enthusiasts that insist on proving the product in the field. This event – called Mission Test – was their way of testing the latest clothing to the limit and learning from the feedback of Europe's top hunting journalists to find ways to improve and advance.

Find out more at www.solognac.com/en-GB



THE LYNX EFFECT

Guesstimated figures, fake science, wildly inaccurate assumptions... the Lynx UK Trust are on the brink of creating a rather large, razor-clawed problem

Rewilding sounds like a lovely idea, doesn't it? The word conjures up romantic ideas of nature being allowed to do its own thing, without man's grubby interference. Clear mountain streams, wildlife frolicking on the hillsides... But beware. Rewilding has become the rallying cry of the most radical self-appointed conservationists. Their plans would wipe away generations of land and wildlife management at a stroke, destroy rural jobs and businesses, and populate our countryside with animals that

have been absent for 1,000 years – probably for good reason – regardless of the consequences. As for field sports, well, you might as well flog your guns now, because you won't be needing those in our brave new rewilded Britain.

The rewilding movement is skilled at self-promotion and manipulating the media. They are full of catchy slogans like "We're working to restore wild nature across Britain" and "Let's make the world a better place". They have the support of celebrities like Chris

Packham, the backing of trendy media figures like George Monbiot, and they can quote any amount of facts and figures to prove that they're not only right, but that every true nature lover supports them.

For instance, you could be forgiven for thinking that the wildlife-loving Great British public are itching to see the lynx released in Scotland. The papers have been full of stories about a reintroduction 'plan', which could see the big cats prowling Scottish hills and forests for the first time in more than 1,300 years. »



PICTURE: ZOOMAR GMBH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

A report has claimed that reintroducing the lynx could generate £65.7 million from ecotourism, create rural jobs, and even save a fortune by keeping down deer numbers. And the public are right behind it, the report claims. We are told that “Up to 91% of people who responded to a poll carried out by the charity earlier this year said they support the move.” Except this is not so much a ‘plan’ as a campaign by a single-species, single-issue pressure group – the Lynx UK Trust. It’s not a charity at all, it’s a CIC – a type of company that is supposed to be more about public good than private profit, but isn’t regulated in the same way as a registered charity.

The group consists of a bunch of conservationists, scientists, public consultation experts, lawyers and the like, who, forgive my cynicism, stand to trouser a significant amount of public money if a lynx reintroduction was to go ahead. In the meantime, their website solicits donations with the words “You can donate to support our work via debit or credit card on Paypal by clicking the button above.” The figures mentioned earlier smell decidedly fishy to me, too – £65.7 million, not 65.6 or 65.8. That’s very precise, considering the wild guesswork involved in predicting exactly how many people will cancel their annual trip to Benidorm and head off to watch lynx in the Scottish Highlands instead. There are plenty of figures bandied about regarding the amount of money that is supposedly generated by ecotourism. You’ll see the RSPB claiming that sea eagles bring £2 million to the Isle of Mull each year, or the rewilding lobby stating that wildlife tourism is worth £65 million per annum to Scotland.

Probe a little deeper and you’ll find that the latter is the headline figure from a piece of research carried out at Bournemouth University in 2010. Read the actual report, rather than just the executive summary, and you discover that this huge figure is based almost entirely on the responses to a survey posted to around 1,500 people who visited Scotland that year. Those that bothered to reply may or may not be representative of the whole. The researchers then applied ‘multipliers’ to that figure to arrive at a vague estimate of how many people visited Scotland each year to watch wildlife, and an even vaguer estimate of how much money they might have spent during their trip. Pages and pages of the report are devoted to justifying the wild assumptions made in arriving at the figures. Naturally, the researchers had to decide what to do with

responses like ‘I went to go walking and enjoy the scenery and the wildlife.’ To me, that doesn’t sound like ecotourism, and it leaves those pseudo-scientific figures looking very shaky indeed, despite the fact that they tend to be quoted as cast-iron facts when it suits the greenies’ purpose.

Anyway, back to the Lynx UK Trust report, and what exactly is “up to 91%”? It sounds like one of those dodgy ‘surveys’ on an advert for anti-ageing cream. If people responded to a poll, they were either for it or they weren’t. The precise number who said ‘Yes I support it’ is known, so calculating the percentage is simple maths. It’s either 91% or it isn’t. You’d think self-proclaimed world-leading scientists could do percentages or, if they couldn’t, then their ‘senior environmental economist’ could get his calculator out.

‘The rewilders don’t seem to have any figures for how many endangered capercaillies would end up as a lynx’s breakfast’

As for the environmental impact of releasing highly efficient self-replicating killing machines into the Scottish countryside, well, apparently we can rest assured. It’s not a problem at all, because they hardly ever attack people and don’t have much of a taste for sheep. In fact, lynx fans claim, they will do us a huge favour by killing lots of those pesky deer, and now apparently 10% of foxes too. And I’m pretty sure they just made that last figure up. They don’t even know how many foxes there are in Scotland, never mind how

many the lynxes would eat for dinner. Besides, I suspect most keepers would rather rely on their own skills at fox control, than risk turning up for work one morning to find a lynx in the release pen. And the rewilders don’t seem to have any figures for how many endangered capercaillies would end up as a lynx’s breakfast.

Newspaper reports tell us that the Lynx UK Trust intends to make a formal application for the necessary licences in the next few months, “with the first animals due to be brought in next year.” That’s what is known in the sales industry as an assumptive close, where the salesman assumes his victim has agreed to buy, and moves the conversation on to details like how many and what method of payment they would prefer. It all adds up to a highly dodgy campaign to introduce a predator the likes of which hasn’t been seen in this country since King Alfred burned the cakes. No one can know all the consequences, good or bad, regardless of how much fake science they might quote. But one thing is for sure, once the genie is out of the bottle it will be one hell of a job to put it back in. The rewilding lobby don’t care. They have no plan for managing the consequences, because they’re not about building something and caring for it; their aim is to destroy what we have now.

The lynx issue is just one prong of a concerted attack on the way the countryside has been managed for generations. Rewilding, reintroductions and the rest are all about wresting control away from the people who have looked after the land for years, making decisions instead by Twitter popularity polls. You can imagine what the consequences will be, and they won’t be pretty, but the rewilders will be grinning from ear to ear. Let’s hope someone sees sense and puts a stop to their mischief before it’s too late. ■

There are fears that the reintroduction of the lynx will impact negatively on our native deer breeds, such as the roe.



PICTURE: LAURIE CAMPBELL



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Pocket rocket

This month John Heagren talks about the gamebird whose very name is enough to get the adrenaline pumping... the woodcock

Whether walked-up or driven, this wild bird provides some tremendous sport. Many shooters may go their whole lives only having shot a dozen or two of these elusive creatures; though most will remember each and every one of them, so sought after a prize are they. Always check with your host at the start of the day that they are happy for you to shoot woodcock, as many shoots now prefer to have them left alone.

Shooting them in cover when walking in the line can be truly exhilarating stuff, though it's important to ensure that the 'red mist' doesn't take over as it's very easy to get carried away and take a shot that can result in disaster. They tend to sit very tight and can explode from beneath your feet at pace, jinking and turning among the trees. Most woodcock usually go forward, which in a walked-up scenario should make for a safe

shot, but always be aware of dogs working ahead of the line and don't take the shot unless you are 100% sure it's safe. The same applies to those that burst forward and then turn back through the line or fly across it, which can also prove hazardous if a Gun is too intent on his prey.

Be ready

Always keep a close watch on your surroundings as you go, constantly appraising what is and isn't a safe area, as when a bird does flush you need to already know where you can and can't shoot; you may have a window of opportunity of only a few seconds. Consequently, it makes sense to carry the gun closed, with the safety on and the muzzles pointing skywards; however areas of uneven ground, obstacles or thick cover dictate that it should be open until the going gets easier.

From a perspective of technique, there isn't really anything specific to talk about when tackling this wonderful bird; just bear in mind that if you are likely to miss a rushed shot at a going-away target, the chances are it will be over the top of your intended target. So make sure your head has a solid connection with the woodwork before pulling the trigger, ideally in combination with your weight being on the front foot. Other than that, you are going to be shooting on instinct; stare hard at the target and let your gun-swing do the work as far as building in any required lead is concerned, on the first shot at least – hopefully the bird won't jink as you pull the trigger. If a second shot is needed, you may well have more time to be a little more measured if Lady Luck is on your side.

Don't forget that woodcock are just as revered as a culinary delight as they are as a sporting bird, so make sure you don't shoot them so close as to waste them in a puff of feathers that sends your dog hither and thither trying to decide which bit of



In thick cover, you won't have much time to think

'Make sure your head has a solid connection with the woodwork before pulling the trigger, with your weight on your front foot'

Woodcock are delicious to eat, so don't shoot them too close and risk ruining the meat



the bird it should bring back first. Always mark the bird down as there are dogs who struggle to find them, while others will trot happily over to the bird yet be very reluctant to retrieve them.

If you are fortunate enough to kill a bird with your first shot, don't rush to reload; it's relatively common for a second bird to flush from nearby soon after the first, and there is nothing more annoying than having the other half of a left and right pop up in front of you while you have your hand in your pocket.

Gun choice

When it comes to choosing the right tool for the job, shy away from anything with overly long barrels if you intend doing a lot of shooting among thick cover. However, as there are few of us who can afford the luxury of owning a 26-inch barrelled gun just for this purpose, 28-inch tubes are fine. If you only have one gun and it's equipped with 30s, or even 32s, you will just have to manage the best that you can. Don't worry too much about having a lot of choke in the gun, cylinder or Skeet is perfect for the first barrel, while $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ might give you a longer reach for follow-up shots. In 12 gauge, a load of 28 or 30g of no.6 is probably ideal, though a fast-moving 20-bore is probably the best calibre for walked-up shooting in cover.

Driven day

Shooting a woodcock on a driven day is a very different affair, although they still jink and flit around, especially as they are emerging out of woodland; they do tend to fly in a slightly more consistent manner when out in the open, making for a slightly easier shot. If they do remain straight and level, remember that although you may be chasing them around the sky with your muzzles, they don't actually fly that quickly, so don't give them too much lead else you may miss in front.

However, the emphasis on safety is still crucial; with beaters in front, Guns either side of you and pickers-up behind you, the consequences of taking a chance on a marginal shot can be long felt, so don't do it. However, if you know the pickers-up are in the line with the Guns, don't be afraid to shoot a woodcock out behind you if you are sure it is safe. The bird that flies along the front of a wood is perhaps one of the most dangerous, as it's easy to shoot at a bird that looks to be halfway up the treeline and a safe shot, only to find that the ground actually slopes upwards, putting the beating team in danger.

Your normal game gun should be fine for driven birds, and if you are lucky enough to be invited to go on a dedicated woodcock drive then no.7 shot should be more than enough for the job at hand, though a little more choke might be useful, perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$, or even $\frac{3}{4}$. Don't expect to see too many of these birds around until the winter has arrived in Northern and Eastern Europe, from which many of the birds migrate. As a rule, expect greater numbers to come in with the moon sometime in November or early December, though the weather can push this earlier or later, while some mild winters may see fewer making the long journey to UK shores.

Shooting flighting woodcock on a moonlit evening can be great fun; remember to try and keep your eyes focused out to around 30 yards or

THE VENUE

Bisley itself has been the nation's 'Home of Shooting' since the 1800s, and Bisley Shooting Ground has long been an integral part of the shotgun shooting community. Set amidst 3,000 acres of stunning heathland and woodland, its two shooting locations – Long Siberia and Cottesloe Heath – offer a perfect environment in which to shoot. With targets that both educate, entertain and challenge shooters of all abilities, BSG offers tuition, guided practice, 'Pay and Play' and hosts popular competitions throughout the year.

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so or you just might not see them at all. With such low light, you need to trust that your gun shoots where you point it and be prepared to move fast. Once again, your chance might not last long before disappearing into the dark. When it comes to the end of the day hopefully you will have a woodcock or two to chat over, and to ponder what the recipe books recommend. Don't forget, though, that if you are a guest it's a nice way of thanking your host or even the keeper by giving them your woodcock; however, it's very unlikely that the precious meat will be wasted no matter what you decide.

Snipe

Although smaller than the woodcock, this tiny bird provides big thrills. Often found in wet, low-lying areas it tends to take off a little further out than woodcock, usually accompanied by some shrill calling as it does so. Again, shoot on instinct when walking up but remember to use the elements to help you; snipe always take off into the wind so bear that in mind when planning your progress. When it comes to encountering driven snipe, they are very awkward to connect with, making woodcock look slow and lumbering by comparison so, once again, it pays not to dawdle too much and let your swing do the work as your instincts take over. ■

THE COACH

John Heagren is well known in both the clay and game shooting community as a coach who gets results, with more than 25 years of experience as a full-time coach and a shooting career going back to his eighth birthday. Having come back to competitive shooting, in the last four years he has topped the FITASC rankings, represented England in International competition and in 2014 won the prestigious Stratstone Super 7 Challenge. He is also a respected shot in the game field and spends much of the winter coaching on the peg.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Out of the mouths of babes

The photo is of my son, Emmet, who shot his first pheasant on Saturday, outside Limavady in Northern Ireland. He is 11 and was alongside his brother Peter who is 12. They love beating and working their dogs, Eden and Tucker. It was a great shot – high and curling. He was using a .410 single barrel, no.6 shot, mag cartridges and said: "I just didn't think about it, just led it and fired." Good advice for us old hands from a new addition.

Thomas Conway, via email



A canny keeper

Under the headline 'The perfect shoot' in the December issue of *Sporting Shooter*, it says 'Too keen to kill'. I myself witnessed a guy who shot a bird no more than six feet from the end of his barrels. The Gun, handing what was left to the keeper, asked: "What should I do with this?" The reply being: "I will try to find another to match it for your brace at the end of the day," which he did, presenting him with two birds which could only be used for ferret food. But this cured the Gun from shooting low birds. It's a pity more keepers don't do the same thing.

Mr DV Edwards, Northants



PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN

Bedtime reading

This is my eight-month-old son, Ollie, doing his bedtime reading.

Richard Stockwell



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Thanks for the good advice

I just wanted to say a massive thank you for all your columns relating to getting your licence, what gun to choose and, more importantly, what cartridge to use.

As a novice shooter, the thought of applying for my licence was quite daunting, especially when not really knowing much about exactly what needs to go in the application. However, your columns relating to how to apply for your licence, along with buying your first gun, were extremely helpful. I now go shooting as much as I can with my Lanber over-and-under, teamed with Hull cartridges! Great work guys and girls.

James Hill, via email



Fantastic feedback

I'd just like to say many thanks for the book I won in your Rifle Shooter prize draw – *Venison, The Game Larder* by Jose Souto. What a stunning book; I'd thoroughly recommend this to anyone who shoots or processes deer. It would make the ideal Christmas present, too! Again, many thanks and keep up the good work.

Pete Power, via email



Game Fair greed

I understand through the grapevine that the Game Fair is on its way out. Greed seems to be the main response from the people I have spoken to in the shooting and fishing fraternity. The last time I was there I spoke to one of the traders, who told me how much he had to make before making any profit, due to pitch fees being so astronomical. As all the infrastructure is there already, why are the pitch fees so high? Also, concession prices of £1 less is nothing – why bother at all? It won't even buy you half a cup of tea.

Mr DV Edwards,
Northants



Bagging a birthday duck



This is a picture of my daughter Kerri Ann out on her 12th birthday at our flight pond. Asked what she would like to do for her birthday, she replied that she wanted to go get a duck or two for her dinner. Kerri Ann is photographed with her two dogs, Bella (the Lab) and Lucy (the cocker). I am a subscriber to *Sporting Shooter* and it is enjoyed by my entire family.

Alwyn Orr, Northern Ireland

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QUIZ QUESTION

Q GRASSIEST MOOCH is an anagram of what bird that was traditionally eaten in this country on 25 December?

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Win Decoys (January), Sporting Shooter, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EG, or email your answer to competitions@sportingshooter.co.uk

NOVEMBER ISSUE WINNER

Congratulations to Andrew Coulter from Livingston, West Lothian. The answer was SHOOT CAPTAIN.

RULES: Closing date is 1 January. Answer will be published in the December issue. Normal Sporting Shooter rules apply. For full terms and conditions, send an sae marked t&c to the postal address above.

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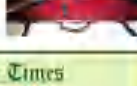
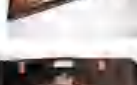
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12g Lincoln Premier Gold 30 O/U Sporter M/C £899
12g Winchester Select 30 O/U Sporter M/C 3" £899
12g Beretta 686 30 O/U Sporter M/C £799
12g Lincoln Premier Gold 30 O/U 14 & 1/2 £899 £799
12g Fabrum Gamma 28 O/U Sporter M/C As New £699
12g Webley & Scott 942 28 O/U Sporter M/C £799 £699
12g Sabatti Falcon 30 O/U Sporter M/C As New £599

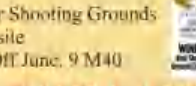
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OR EMAIL: news@sportingshooter.co.uk

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Cold feet conundrum

Q I tend to get very cold feet when stood waiting at my peg on a driven day and as a result, I have to constantly move around to keep them warm. With the harder weather coming up, I would like to be able to concentrate on my shooting instead of my cold feet. Do you have any advice or recommendations for footwear which may help me?

A THE SPARSHOLT TEAM replies: When your overall temperature drops, your body's physiological response is to reduce blood flow to extremities in order to keep vital organs warm, your feet and hands bearing the brunt. Give your feet the advantage by wearing appropriate winter socks. People often think that wearing multiple layers of thick socks will therefore keep your feet warmer, however, too many layers of socks can lead to tighter boots, which in turn, leads to cold toes! If your boots are too big there can be a tendency to keep curling your toes and tightening your feet and thereby restricting the blood circulation; it is therefore essential to find boots that fit you properly – remember to look for half sizes if needed.

Look at wearing socks made with merino wool which is a non-itchy wool that provides good insulation. Try to stay away from cotton-lined wellingtons; they provide little insulation on those colder days, especially when you can be stood for long periods of time. Look

instead for neoprene-lined models; these are far better at keeping your feet warm.

By far the best footwear option for keeping your feet warm and dry, and what we recommend to our students here at Sparsholt College, are the leather lace-up boots; they offer the most ankle support when walking along uneven or slippery terrain and the lace-up system enables you to find the best possible fit. The breathable liner allows your foot's perspiration to escape, which further helps insulation.

January is a glorious month to be out with the gun – cold, hard, frosty mornings and educated, high-flying pheasants. Ensuring you are prepared and wearing the right kit should mean you can enjoy your shooting and forget about the cold.



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

Posting pointy prezzies

Q I am thinking of buying a knife for my brother for Christmas. Is it okay to send it through the post?

A JONNY CROCKETT replies: According to the Royal Mail, it is fine to send sharp items (axes, knives, tools, etc.) through the post, so long as it does not pose any risk whatsoever to employees, customers or anyone else coming into contact with the item posted. This means that when you are posting you should adopt a belt-and-braces approach to wrapping. Personally, I use extra cardboard to wrap any sharp or pointed item and take the potential hit on extra postal costs. The bottom line, though, is that it is legal. However, any injury caused as a result of not packaging safely could result in prosecution.



PICTURE: JAMES MARCHINGTON

Best hide materials

Q What is the best material to use for building a pigeon hide?

A ANDY CROW replies: There is no right or wrong answer, really. I often use local vegetation, from evergreen boughs to hazel branches. Sometimes I don't use net at all. When I do, I tend to use a combination to 'layer' my hide. I have some different coloured old army camo nets – some pale, some dark. I also use a lot of the modern 'stealth camo' type nets. They have the advantage of allowing you to see out when crouching down but won't let the pigeons see in. The main thing is to match the colour of the environment you are shooting in and to give yourself a chance to see out to spot incoming targets.



PICTURE: DOM HOLTAM

Travelling light

Q I'm going on a hunting trip in Canada. We all have to pack light and I was wondering if there was anything I could do to minimise my wash kit and still stay hygienic?

A JONNY CROCKETT replies: Here are some alternatives:

Toothbrush – a hazel twig the size of a toothbrush handle can be chewed until it frays. Chew for a further 15 minutes or so and the plaque will be removed from your teeth.

Toothpaste – a pea-sized amount of clay (not clay from the surface) can be used instead of toothpaste.

Deodorant – take any edible root (burdock, dandelion or thistle), crush and boil it. The water will appear cloudy. Heat the water until it evaporates and only the residue remains. This is starch. When it's properly dried and

fluffed up it looks like talcum powder.

Soap – crushed campion roots, chestnut leaves or citrus fruit water.

That should save an ounce or two!

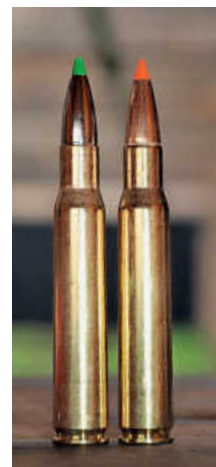


A different take on deodorant

Confused by jargon

Q My mate refers to his ammunition as 'ballistic tip'. What does that actually mean?

A DOM HOLTAM replies: I believe that the term Ballistic Tip is actually a registered trademark for Nosler. However, many people use the term when referring to any brand of plastic-tipped bullets. The point of the plastic tip is to allow the bullet to mimic the slippery shape of a 'spitzer' bullet (giving good aerodynamics for long-range accuracy), while retaining the construction of a hollow point. The plastic tip is also used to initiate expansion – this can make for an almost explosive high-velocity varminting round, or just as effectively assist controlled expansion at lower velocities if long-range hunting, depending on the construction of the bullet, jacket, etc.



PICTURE: DOM HOLTAM

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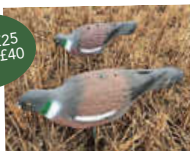
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US Nationals are a washout

San Antonio in Texas is usually a safe bet for warm, dry weather but the week of the 2015 Nationals proved to be rather different. With rain and strong winds throughout the week, the decision was taken to cancel all shooting on the Saturday due to concerns about the safety of the 1,800-plus competitors on the ground. Freak weather had produced rains that dumped more than four inches of water onto the ground in less than three hours, which led to flash flooding and parts of the FITASC prelim course were quite literally washed away. The event, though, had something of a lucky escape, as just 30 miles to

the east an incredible 17 inches of rain had fallen, leaving devastation in its wake.

The cancellation of Saturday left the organisers with something of a dilemma as one third of competitors had shot the four main courses over two days early in the week, with the remaining two thirds supposedly shooting their four courses and 300 targets over Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In the end, the decision was made to disregard the scores from the fourth course of the early week rotations and make the event out of a total of 224 targets. The title was then decided in a 22-man Super Final shoot-off rather than the

usual first-past-the-post format, meaning that leader Bill McGuire who had shot 218 now had to start from scratch. In the end, the win went to William Walton (208), while Todd Simmons (210) took second place and David Radulovich (215) took third, which was the same spot he had earned over the 224 birds. Ben Hustwaite flew the flag for the UK, winning the Five Stand event, while expat Doug Vine won the International Class with 214.

Ben won the Five Stand event with a 98 ex 100



William Walton took the title in controversial circumstances



Much of the San Antonian ground was under water



Brits triumph in South Africa

The third ICTSF World Sporting was held at the Valley Gun Club near Capetown, where a somewhat reduced entry of 131 shooters took part. The two 100-bird courses were far from easy, with some quick long-range targets more reminiscent of FITASC birds in some places. However, Martin Myers took it all in his stride to finish atop the podium with an impressive score of 186, having shot a 16 in the final. Nick Hendrick took the Silver, while George Digweed took third just ahead of Mark Winsor and Jamie Brightman.

The all-British podium was repeated in Juniors where Ben Sutton was crowned champion on 172 ahead of Taylor Hedgecock and Josh Bridges. We were on top once again in Vets with John Wells collecting the Gold on 173 followed by Keith Roe and H Wills. Sara Chambers made it a full house of champions in Ladies, with A Skeggs second and Rachel Willcock third.

In the Team events, England had a huge margin of victory of 49 targets over Ireland in Seniors, while this was a close-run thing compared to the 76-point margin that the Junior team had over the second-placed South African team. Things were a little closer in Vets where England's margin was just 36, again South Africa taking second. In Ladies, it was something of a one-horse race, so the Gold was theirs for the taking.

Rachel Willcock took third in Ladies



The competitors faced tough targets, some of which had similar characteristics to FITASC birds



A great performance from Martin Myers



Starshot perfection

This year's National Starshot Final saw shooters from around the country coming together at Garlands Shooting Ground. The crowd was treated to an impressive demonstration of shooting from winner Colin Will, who powered his way to the title having shot three perfect rounds of 88 straight to finish on an incredible score of 264. The runner-up spot went to Dougie Aspdon whose score of

251 would normally have been more than enough to earn him the win. Gareth Slack was close behind on 249, with Steve Whitlock fifth on 237.

Former winner Colin seemed as surprised as everyone else with the result and looked, for a moment at least, to be somewhat taken aback at his incredible performance, though his efforts were well rewarded in the form of a Browning shotgun and Eley cartridges.

Colin Will (centre) is presented with his prizes after some phenomenal shooting

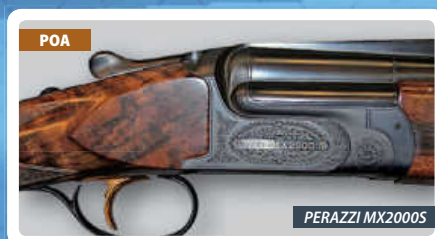
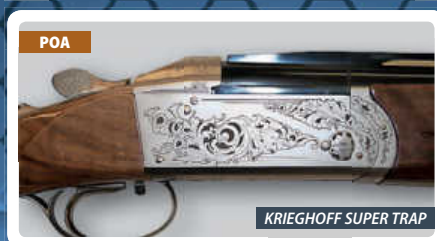
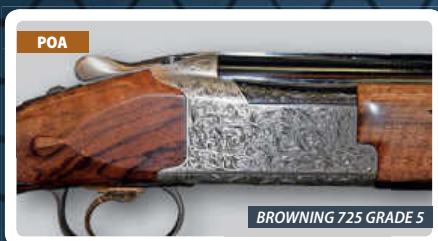
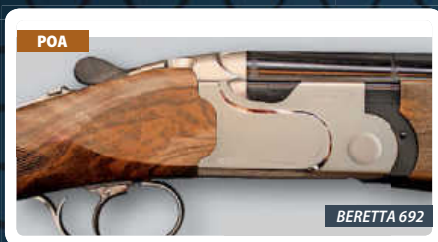




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THE MARKETPLACE

Bumper 10-page Christmas Gift Guide

Welcome to the Marketplace – Christmas special. In here you will find all the inspiration you need to buy gifts for your shooting friends and family. Whether gundog lovers, game shooters, stalkers or pigeon shooters, we've got it covered. There's a nifty stocking filler guide too. And if you want to leave the pages surreptitiously open, with certain items of interest highlighted, well that's up to you!

INSIDE THE MARKETPLACE THIS MONTH...

38 **The perfect presents** – We've got all your shopping needs covered this Christmas. From gloves to cartridge bags, shooting coats to ladies gilets, and everything in between, our guide takes the guesswork out of choosing gifts.

44 **Gun test** – Mike is testing the Krieghoff K80 Parcoures – a modern, innovative gun that has evolved from the classic K32

54 **Cartridges** – Vic's choice of loads for mid-season birds

52



54



38



42



CHRISTMAS PRODUCTS

Our pick of the latest kit, the best value buys and the brightest new ideas

Carry with class

Cartridges don't come cheap, and pockets are notoriously good at spitting them out. The Cavendish cartridge bag, from Robey and Green, is a smart alternative, and really tops off any shooting attire. Made from a sand-coloured, water-resistant canvas with dark Havana leather piping and fastenings, a dark green adjustable webbing shoulder strap, and finished with solid brass buckles, this classic cartridge bag is not an afterthought, but rather a feature to be worn with pride. A hinged speed-load design allows for easy access, and the bag can hold up to 100 loose cartridges.

RRP: £95 www.iancoley.co.uk



Kit for kids

It's all well and good kitting yourself out with the latest clobber, but if you plan on attending shoots with brood in tow then the brood, like yourself, must be suitably clad; proper protection from the elements is an absolute must. Featuring a tough, water- and windproof Seetex membrane, classical styling and spacious pockets ideal for cartridges, the Seeland Woodcock suit is all your child needs to look smart and stay dry and protected while out on a shoot. The trousers have adjustable hemlines to allow for growth spurts, and the jacket's fleece-lined pockets will be sure to keep little hands warm in chilly weather. The Brecks also allow for growing girls and boys with an elasticated waist and, like the trousers, adjustable hemlines.

RRP: Jacket £89.99, Trousers £69.99, Brecks £49.99 in sizes 4-16 years
www.seelanduk.co.uk



The perfect gift is in sight

If you're thinking of buying shooting glasses for someone this Christmas, speak to the experts. With over 50 years' optical experience, Optilabs are specialists in prescription sports eyewear, precision-making all lenses in their in-house laboratory. Buy now and enjoy £20 off normal prices until 31 December 2015.

RRP: from £99.95

www.optilabs.com



What have we ear?!

In cold weather you lose a lot of heat through your head, and although the same can't be said for your ears, it doesn't do to let them get cold either – easier said than done when out on a cold shoot all day. But Alan Paine has got you covered. The Compton Gents Cap with ear-warmers is made from 100% pure wool, which is waterproof and breathable, with soft, fleece-lined, ear-warming flaps. The tweed finish is stylish and complements most country attire.

RRP: £39.99

www.alainpaine.co.uk



Roll up, roll up!

A roll collar is a great alternative to a scarf. In harsh weather, when the wind feels like it's trying to whip the gun from your grasp, the last thing any shooter needs is two yards of unruly, billowing scarf to deal with as well. This roll collar, by Harkila, is lightweight yet warm, made from soft, non-itchy 100% merino wool, and comes in a lovely dark shadow brown to tie-in with your sporting kit. Practical with a subtle sense of luxury, it's a bargain at under £20!

RRP: £19.99 www.harkila.com



Pack up in style

The Cambridge slip and cartridge bag from Ogdens is a classically styled range of luggage that uses a three-layer construction of canvas, bridal leather and sheepskin fleece (for the lining).

Solid brass fittings are used to produce a hard-wearing range of bags that are made in England.

The slip is available in two lengths to accommodate either 28"/30" barrels and 30"/32" barrels.

The cartridge bag has a hinged lid and holds 125 shells.

RRP: Slip £89.99, Bag £79.99

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Stand out in the Field

Belgian technical clothing brand, John Field has updated the design of its Ladakh shooting jacket and trousers for the 2015/16 season. Now available in a darker Forest Green, the bestselling outfit is now even better suited to blending into the British countryside.

The warm, lightweight and waterproof outfit boasts numerous well-positioned pockets plus a Primaloft lining, making it extremely breathable. The jacket's high-tech fabric is complemented with a touch of tweed to create a jacket with a difference, but which still meets all the requirements of a shooting jacket with game pocket, padded flap for sitting on, and a bag for empty cartridges. There are also shoulder pockets for recoil pads and a set of heat patches for the wrist and neck pockets. Matching trousers with reinforced fabric and zippers at the bottom of each leg are also available.

Sizes: XS-XXXL

RRP: Jacket £300, Trousers £210

www.johnfield.eu



Look – no hands!

Calling all game shooters! No more will you struggle to carry all your birds around. No more will you desperately wish to itch your nose and end up with a mouthful of feathers. No more will you precariously juggle your equipment, guns, birds and thermos to varying success. The Velveteen Game Carrier, named after Victorian gamekeepers (or Velveteens), keeps your hands completely free, looks smart, and carries up to four brace. The carrier has smart leather fastenings, high-quality webbing, and comes in a range of colours and models; so there's something for everyone.

RRP: £69 www.augustuspink.com



Pretty performance

Once upon a time, the only colours high-performance outdoor wear came in were dark, dull and rather depressing. Non-essential additional features were virtually unheard of. Not anymore! The lovely Katy unisex fleece gilet, by John Field, embodies the new trend for aesthetically pleasing technical clothing. Made from Tecnopile fleece, which is washable, abrasion-resistant, anti-pilling, and bonded with sheepskin-esque fleece on the inside, the gilet is warm, breathable and durable. It comes in a non-garish but cheerful blackberry colour, with leather piping around the four well-placed pockets and collar, and a faux-horn toggle at the neck. It's perfect for shooting, too, as arm movement is not restricted.

Sizes XXS-XXXXL

RRP: £95 www.johnfield.eu



A touch of class

The Windsor Game gun by Cogswell & Harrison is a real icon of its time. Regal, beautiful, strong and reliable, it's the ideal gift to treat that special shooter in your life.

The Windsor is available in 12g, 20g and 28g, with 28" or 30" M/C barrels. It is three-inch chambered, steel shot proof and has a single selective trigger, ejector and auto safe. Both right- and left-hand versions are available.

RRP: £1,145

www.cogswellandharrison.com



The Windsor Game over-and-under comes with five internal chokes and boasts an attractive walnut stock.

Canine comfort

If you want to sleep sound in the knowledge that your dog is doing likewise this Christmas, a pocket-sprung Waterproof Orthopaedic bed from Berkeley Dog Beds is just the ticket.

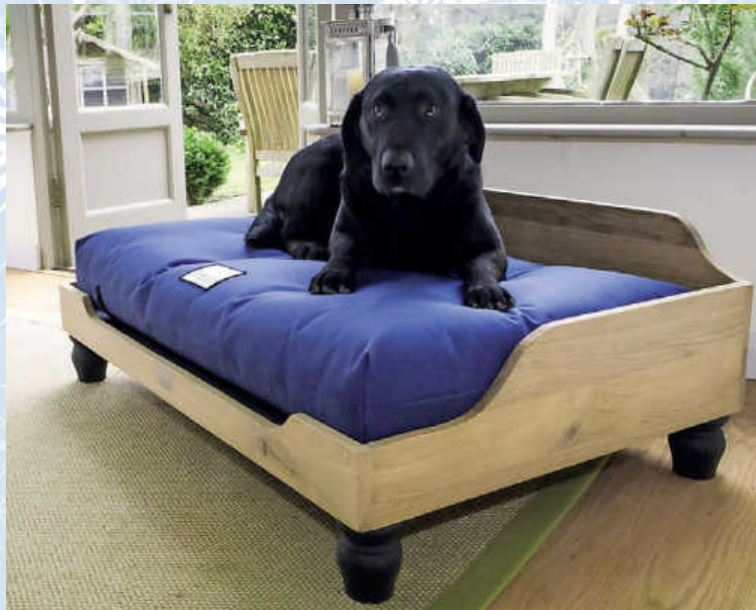
This innovative mattress is 15cm (6") thick and is made up of a central layer of pocket springs sandwiched between four layers of rebound felt. This core is then wrapped in lambswool and compressed and buttoned inside a tough, zipped, natural cotton drill inner bag.

A pocket-spring mattress is the preferred choice for most human orthopaedic beds, so why not for dogs? They contain many individual springs, housed in fabric pockets, all working independently of each other and offering support from the edge to the very centre of the mattress. These provide a dynamic response to the natural body movement of your dog, cushion vulnerable exposed joints such as hips and elbows, and allow your dog the freedom to either 'nest' or stretch out with ease.

These durable beds are heavy, so won't slide around on the floor. They come in three sizes and are available with a range of covers. The standard outer cover is a 100% waterproof, PVC-backed, polyester pillow-case design that is sealed with heavy-duty Velcro.

RRP: from £139

www.berkeleydogbeds.co.uk



A little bit of luxury and comfort

These leather lanyards from Paws for Thought (Dog Training Supplies) are the perfect stocking fillers this festive season. In either a beaded or plain design, they are stylish and practical.

And for those whose gundogs need a bit of extra help in the coat department, there is the canine jacket. Lightweight yet made from a robust cordura, the coat features reflective trim to ensure visibility on winter evenings. There is also a pocket that's perfect for storing essentials, such as poo bags and extra leads.

RRP: Lanyard: plain £10, beaded £12.50

Canine Field Jacket: £39.45

www.dogtrainingsupplies.co.uk



Santa paws

Fieldsports photographer, Charles Sainsbury-Plaice has produced a new dog-themed range of Christmas cards. The large, A5 cards feature a heart-warming collection of dogs in Santa hats that read 'Santa Paws'. In amongst them are a lurcher, Patterdale terrier, Jack Russell, springer spaniel and Labrador. Ideal to send to like-minded doggy devotees.

RRP: £2.95 each, £19.99 pack of 10

www.countrysidegreetings.com



A vest of interest

It's great when a product is designed based on feedback from the 'real world', and that is exactly the case with the new Gundog Gear Training Vest, developed with Firedog.

"Firedog's Hunter Dummy Vest has been a massive hit with our customers," says Emma McCarthy of Gundog Gear. "We've listened to feedback, and taken advice from A Panel spaniel judge, Ray Casey. The revised design is based closely upon the Hunter Dummy Vest, but with new features to aid working test competitors, triallers and those out picking-up."

The back of the new vest is about four inches longer than the Hunter Dummy Vest, making it easier to reach around and into the game pocket. The game pocket itself is more spacious and there are hand-warmer pockets in both sides of the chest. A ring has also been added to the bottom corner of the front left pocket, to which you can attach a lead.

The two large front pockets provide enough space for other training tools and one small pocket provides comfortable space for smaller things. There is also a large zipped pocket inside for keys, wallet, etc. The vest is easy to clean, washable and water-resistant.

RRP: £68 www.gundoggear.co.uk



Mud and plates in their place

Alongside all the normal training aids and kit that the Working Dog Company supplies, you'll find a selection of doggy-themed goodies that are ideal gifts for gundog lovers.

The Working Dog Place Mats and Coasters sets, for instance, which come in Working Dog, Labrador or Spaniel designs. There's also a fun, yet fully functional, doormat/barrier rug – a stylish way to make sure muddy foot (or paw) prints aren't trailed through the house. The machine-washable rug measures 45 x 100cm and comes in black or red.

RRP: Coasters (set of six) £10.99, Place Mats (set of six) £24.99

The Muck Stops Here Barrier Rug £15

www.workingdogcompany.co.uk



Place mats and coasters come in sets of six



Practical presents for dog owners



This dog key rack with jumping Labrador motif is both useful and an ideal decoration for the home of any gundog owner. Made from a high-quality galvanised steel, it is strong and ideal for hanging leashes, collars, whistles, keys and other small accessories.

The surface is painted with a black lacquer for a sleek finish. Other designs are available.

On an equally practical note is this poo bag holder from Mystique.

The nylon bag dispenser has a Velcro side opening and contains one roll of poo bags. It can also be used as a mini prey dummy.

Available in various colours, including green, red, khaki, blue, orange, yellow, wine red and black.

RRP: Key Rack £25; Poo Bag Holder £5.50

www.muntjactrading.com



Super supplies from Sporting Saint

Make someone's Christmas with a selection of training supplies from Sporting Saint. With such a variety of kit to choose from, the options are endless, but there are several new items this year.

The All in One rabbit and hare dummies have been designed to help accustom dogs to picking-up fur/game and to hold the dummy correctly. The dummy is designed in three parts that

are all joined together. When the middle part is held by the dog the other two parts hang down the side of the dog's mouth. The rabbit dummy weighs around 1lb and the hare around 4lb.

Also new – and exclusive to Sporting Saint – is the Rapid Multi Shot Dummy Launcher. This is a pistol that is a multi (five) shot dummy launcher, sold with one dummy included (normal dummy price, £15.99). The pistol uses the 9mm .380 pistol blanks only (£14.50 for 50) and fires the launcher dummy approximately 60m. It can also be used as a blank firing pistol on its own, and is compact enough to fit into a training bag or waistcoat.

RRP: Rabbit Dummy £21, Hare £28, Pistol £199

www.sportingsaint.co.uk



Nite Site Digital NV

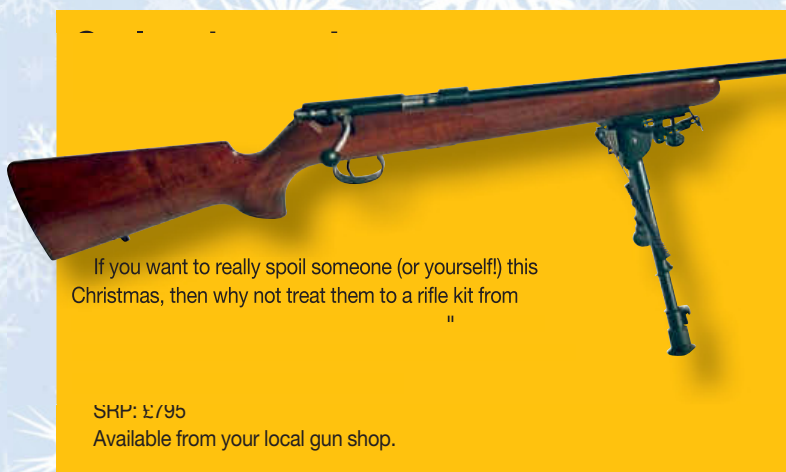
As premier stockists of the 2015 Nite Site range of night vision add-ons and handheld spotters, Scott Country has the new range for you to try before you buy with their dedicated demo service (conditions apply).

Whether you are looking for the long-range 500m identification capability of the Eagle, mid-range 300m range of the Wolf, or short-range 100m capability of the Viper for air rifle and rimfire, there is a Nite Site model to suit your application and budget.

The new Spotter Extreme is the only digital night vision device on the market to provide up to 20x optical zoom, and a 500m identification range.

Prices start at £449 for Viper, £639 for Wolf, £849 for Eagle, and £949 for Spotter Extreme.

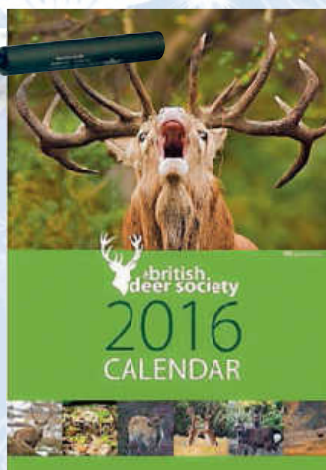
www.scottcountry.co.uk Tel: 01556 503587



If you want to really spoil someone (or yourself!) this Christmas, then why not treat them to a rifle kit from

SRP: £795

Available from your local gun shop.



Deer-ly beloved

Once again The British Deer Society (BDS) has produced a calendar filled with the most beautiful and exciting pictures of deer that it could lay its hands on. Turn the pages to discover a stunning new photograph every month. Perfect for deer lovers, stalkers and wildlife enthusiasts.

RRP: £11 www.bds.org.uk

Stunning custom knives

If you are fastidious about your blades and fancy treating yourself, you could do worse than to check out Emberleaf Workshops. They specialise in custom blades made to the very highest standards and from the best materials available.

This stunning Cael AR set features two hunting knives aimed at deerstalkers with Witte-Teal stabilised maple burl handles and AEB-L steel blades.

RRP: from £600

www.emberleaf.com



Light fantastic

This cordless, rechargeable lamp from Deben's Tracer Sportlight range is ideal for foxers travelling light. It has an impressive 500m beam and a 2½-hour run time, and with its durable, weatherproof polycarbonate body and tough Lexan lens, it'll handle the toughest of conditions. The lamp comes complete with a charger and red filter.

RRP: £69

www.ukshootwarehouse.com



The best of both worlds

Sometimes practicality overrides tradition, and sometimes you don't have to choose! This innovative rifle sling by Seeland provides the best of both worlds. A classic, one-shoulder sling on first inspection, it incorporates a subtle zip which, when undone, transforms it into a two-shoulder, rucksack-style rifle holder. It's just perfect for the Bear Grylls of the stalking world, who enjoy tackling rough terrain and employing every available limb to crawl into position. Safely stowed in the centre of your back, the sling allows for the full use of both hands, and can just as easily be zipped back up and slung across one shoulder should the going soften a little. Genius, really!

RRP: £33.99 www.seelanduk.co.uk



Compact Lofting Poles, Lofting Hooks & Pigeon Decoys Kit

This compact set from UK Shoot Warehouse is a great gift for the keen pigeon shooter. It comprises eight lightweight aluminium poles, featuring high-quality swaged ends allowing the poles to interlock and giving a total reach of over 7.5m. Additionally, it has five lofting hooks, five flocked, full-bodied pigeon decoys, and a bag made by Croots England.

RRP: £115

www.ukshootwarehouse.com



Champion of chairs

Comfortable, transportable seating that won't deposit you in the mud at the slightest breeze is hard to come by; some have resigned themselves to the fact that they will never find a soft, carry-able surface on which to rest their behinds. But don't despair – Seeland have come to the rescue of bottoms everywhere with this multi-functioning wonder of a rucksack chair. The fleece-lined backrest and seat keep you well cushioned and warm while offering unrivalled back support, and the padded shoulder straps on the rucksack make for easy transportation. The chair folds easily into the rucksack leaving room for extra kit, and the whole package looks neat and well designed. What a comprehensive solution to a simple problem!

RRP: £69.99

www.seelanduk.co.uk



Blind faith

Pigeon shooters need a variety of different hide camo for different seasons, crops and backgrounds. The ability to 'layer up' different camo allows for a more realistic hide. This Omnitex 3D fabric in Mossy Oak Infinity is polypropylene, so won't rot or mildew, and is also glare free. Available in 12' x 56" packs.

RRP: £40

www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk



DIY decoys

Decoys looking a bit tired? This UV paint from A1 Decoy is just the ticket to spruce them up and start pulling in the birds again.

Available in white and grey.

RRP: £11.99

www.a1decoy.co.uk



Stick it to 'em

A perfect pigeon shooter's stocking filler, this 10-pack of neck props will allow you to add shot birds to your pattern with that all-important 'head-up' appearance to show off those white neck bars.

RRP: £6.99

www.thepigeonshooter.com



Sillosocks Motorised Pigeon Flapper Hypa-Flap Decoy

The new Sillosocks Motorised Pigeon Flapper from UK Shoot Warehouse is lightweight, realistic and one of the most effective pigeon decoys to hit the UK market in recent years.

RRP: from £49

www.ukshootwarehouse.com

For an extra £12 you can buy an Extendable Telescopic Bouncer to mount your Hypa-Flap decoy on.



Mucking about

Cold, wet feet used to be an unfortunate and unavoidable affliction of country life. Who hasn't experienced premature rigor mortis in their toes when the temperatures are low and the action too slow? The Original Muck Boot Company has created an extreme conditions boot for women that is not only 100% waterproof, but warm, breathable and stylish, too. The Arctic Sport II boots are fully fleece-lined, come in a good range of colours and full- or calf-height options. The sole is made with CR Flex-Foam – a clever material that is very durable but light, and provides shock absorption and heat retention. Great for winter walks, shoots, skiing holidays, popping to the shop on icy mornings and just about any other chilly situation. They've even re-vamped their Rugged II Muck Boot for kids, making it even warmer and easier to pull on and off – great for kids whose main concern is getting outside and into muddy puddles as quickly as possible!

RRP: Ladies tall £95,
Ladies calf £90, Kids £60
www.muckbootcompany.co.uk



Nosy Parker

Often the inevitable consequence of warm, practical dressing is a strong resemblance to your great-aunt Myrtle. Country clothing brand Maude & Fox are well on their way to squashing this stereotype once and for all. Their country-chic, tweed-with-a-twist designs mix classic fabrics with unconventional shapes and beautiful detailing, and manage to prettily perch on just the right side of quirky. If one product perfectly epitomises the brand's tone, it is the Nosy Parker. Traditional, high-quality Yorkshire tweed maintains a classy, country feel, while the unusual parker shape adds a subtle, modern edge. Far from being a futile fashion statement, this coat is fantastically warm with a full fleece lining, lined pockets to keep those hands toasty, and a big, beautiful fur-lined hood. The patriot detailing to



the roomy pockets blends in seamlessly with the overall design. This coat is suitable for a day of shooting, but equally would not look out of place in the town. A timeless, quality investment piece.

RRP: £480 (Yes, it's pricey, but it's fabulously well made. And think of the brownie points that would fall out of the wrapping paper with this one, come Christmas day!)

www.maudefandfox.com

Gorgeous gloves

There's no doubt about it, gloves are essential shooting attire, and these ones make the most gorgeous, sumptuous gift for shooting ladies. Soft, dark leather palms contrast beautifully with a tweed outer for a stunning, classy finish.

RRP: £59.99 www.alanpaine.co.uk



Wrap up

Wraps are very fashionable at the moment – or so the windows on the high street tell us, anyway. This one is an absolute beauty, and won't look out of place on a shoot day. Made from pure wool in a range of stunning colours, it hangs in gentle, flattering folds, and has the added benefit of being water-repellent. This makes a lovely, luxurious and elegant gift for any lady.

RRP: £99.99 www.alanpaine.co.uk



Practical, yet girl

Gamebirds Clothing is a unique shooting and country clothing label, designed by ladies, for ladies, on the peg, on the lead, and on the lan.

The initial collection is all about introducing brand's core autumn/winter items, such as the skinny range of moleskin and cord trousers at breeks, with 2% elastane, which are practical and comfortable for long days in the field, but also flattering and elegant to wear.

The Ptarmigan Tweed Waistcoat and Quail Tweed Breeks are made with Gamebirds Tweed and are neatly fitted and superb to wear. Rich with details and features, the Ptarmigan Tweed Waistcoat, designed ultimately to pair with the Quail Breeks, happily complements either the Grouse Moleskin Breeks or the Woodcock Cord Breeks.

RRP: Ptarmigan Waistcoat £189.95, Quail Tweed Breeks £149.95, Skinny Pheasant Moleskin Trousers £89.95, Skinny Grouse Moleskin Breeks £94.95, Skinny Partridge Cord Trousers £89.95, Skinny Woodcock Cord Breeks £94.95, Widgeon Moleskin Waistcoat £139.95

www.gamebirdsclothing.co.uk



Fabulous fleece

Country Clothing legends Schöffel have been making great outdoor gear since 1804; in fact, the company is still run by a Schöffel. Perhaps that's why their iconic, Polartec Thermal Pro gilet remains so popular; with over 200 years of expertise behind it, it must be pretty good by now! It has a lovely shape with a half drawcord

option for a flattering fit at the waist, two zipped pockets (handy for keeping cartridges, car keys and sherbet lemons safe), and a snazzy alcantara trim. Surprisingly smart and perfect for shoots, the gilet is now available in a fab new colour – a beautiful, soft fern green.

RRP: £129.95 www.iancoley.co.uk



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Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Tue 7pm-9pm
Sat 10.30am-12.30pm



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CLULITE PRO SCANNER 1000 GUNLIGHT

Constructed from aircraft grade alloy giving added protection and durability. Makes a great hand held torch.

PRICE: £79.00



GUARDIAN CANTERBURY LUXIAN ELITE SHOTGUN SLIP

Combining premium grade chestnut leathers and traditional designs the Canterbury collection has been carefully crafted to produce a range of products renowned for their functionality and classic elegance.

PRICE: £105.00



JACK PYKE RIFLE AND SIGHT SLIP

Leather trim with padded lining sling & carry handles pouch will take gun with scope size 25cm high x 125cm long

PRICE: £34.95



JACK PYKE RIFLE BAG

Large padded main section for rifle and sights. One large external pouch. Two smaller external pouches. Large zipped pocket.

PRICE: £49.95



KNOCKDOWN RABBIT TARGET

Target can be set back up with a pull cord once the target is anchored to the ground. Heavy metal construction. Suitable for all power air rifles in any calibre.

PRICE: £19.95



BOX OF 20 PIGEON DECOYS

Great value pack of 20 whole bird pigeon decoys.

PRICE: £49.00



CLULITE LONG RANGER LED PISTOL LIGHT

The Long Ranger LED Pistol Light uses the latest CREE LED which produces 1200 lumens with a 500m beam.

PRICE: £45.00



AIGLE CHERBROOK BOOT

Full grain leather upper with polyamide membrane MTD for waterproofness and breathability. Hard wearing rubber outsole. KHAKI SIZES 39-46.

PRICE: £79.95



JACK PYKE HUNTERS JACKET

Waterproof - Breathable - Noiseless Outer shell: 100% polyester brushed tricot with laminated membrane lining.

PRICE: £69.95



ALLEN WINDOW MOUNT BAG

Allen Shoot'n Filled Window Mount Bag - Fits over window, fence or mirror. Ideal for Lamping out of vehicle.

PRICE: £19.99



CLUSON LED LAZERLITE

The brightest and whitest LED hand held light available with an incredible beam.



PRICE: £79.00

KOLPIN - RHINO VEHICLE GRIP

Safely and securely transport your gear. Durable, flexible grips cushion and protect while providing custom fit. Mounts on an...

PRICE: £60.00



JACK PYKE FIELDMAN WELLIES

Gusset with buckle fastening. Off track rubber sole with integral toe grip and kick heel. 3mm neoprene lining. Available in Green. Sizes: 6-12.

PRICE: £69.95



NITESITE - WOLF

The WOLF is the perfect night vision unit for any hunter, delivering high quality, clear night vision through any day vision rifle scope.

- Identification range: 300 metres (330 yards)*
- Net weight (excluding battery): 440g
- Usable calibre: Any

PRICE: £635.00



BISLEY CLEANING KIT



12G cleaning kit. Everything you need in a tough carry case.

PRICE: £34.50

BUFFALO RIVER MOBILE CLEANING CENTRE

The unique design allows the Cleaning centre to be folded away into its box for easy storage or transport to the range or in the field when hunting.



PRICE: £34.95

PULSAR QUANTUM XD19S

The new Pulsar XD19S Thermal Imager features a 50hz thermal core, combined with a full colour palette microbolometer, range finding reticle system and up to 500m detection range.



PRICE: £1,995.00

SQUIRREL PAPER TARGET

6.7 X 6.7 INCH
17 X 17 CM

PRICE: £4.95



TRACER 12V SPORT GUN LIGHT - 140 VP

Powerful, lightweight and durable. Adjustable focusing system. Variable power. Featuring a vertical filament 50W halogen bulb, capable of producing a super bright 400 metre beam.



PRICE: £44.99

BUSHNELL TROPHY CAM

- 3, 5 or 6 MP high-quality full colour resolution
- Day/night autosensor
- External power compatible
- Adjustable PIR (Lo/Med/High/Auto)
- 0.8-second trig. speed

PRICE: £149.00



HAWKE COMPACT BINOCULAR

- Multi-coated optics
- Lightweight
- Fold down eye cups
- Centre focus
- Folds to pocket size
- Carry case & neck strap



PRICE: £19.95

HAWKE LASER RANGE FINDER 400M PRO

Laser Range Finder, Carry Case, Wrist Strap & CR2 Battery.

PRICE: £145.00



DERBY TWEED BODYWARMER

- Made from a high quality tweed fabric including 60% wool mix.
- Traditional and hard wearing Derby Tweed
- Heavy duty 2 way zip
- Colours: Sage & Dark Tweed
- Sizes Small - 3XL

PRICE: £49.95



JACK PYKE COUNTRYMAN TROUSERS

- Heavy duty cotton canvas
- Reinforced with 600D waterproof Oxford cordura at the knee and seat
- 2 Front upper pockets
- 2 Cargo pockets with flaps
- Rear zipped pockets

PRICE: £46.00



A touch of luxe

No gentleman shooter should be without a smart, functional pair of gloves, for practical purposes if nothing else. These gloves tick every box – water-resistant sheepskin leather and a high-quality, ultra-fine fleece lining combine to ensure dryness and warmth, while the dark brown, glossy finish and tweed trim present a smart, stylish appeal. Designed for shooters, they feature left- and right-hand trigger-finger fold-back Velcro flaps – no chance of a chilly trigger-finger between drives! To top it all off, they come in a branded gift box, making these the ideal, touch-of-luxe present for any shooting man.

RRP: £49.99

www.alanpaine.co.uk



Pellet safety

The best things come in small packages, as they say, and this is the perfect stocking filler. The handy little pellet saver from RWS will keep your pellets safe in your bag or your pocket.

RRP: £3.90

www.ruag.co.uk



Musical Mayhem

Farmers play classical symphonies to calm cows during milking; boxers motivate themselves pre-fight by listening to 'pumped-up' tracks; meditation fanatics have been utilising whale-song since Ghandi was a lad; so it was only a matter of time before some smart cookie had the idea of creating music especially for shooters. Murray, from Murray's Musical Mayhem, has compiled a CD, entitled Side-by-Side, which contains a mix of tracks bearing names such as 'Skeet', 'Game' and 'Pull'. Murray's goal was to inspire a feeling of pride and unity within our sport, and to get the Guns' feet tapping! He advises listening to it before shooting to calm nerves, or after to reminisce to. It sounds a bit 'out there', but I bet the first farmer that rigged up a sound system and let rip with the Mozart got some strange looks, too.

RRP: £12 (inc. UK postage)

Email: cowiesan@gmail.com Tel: 07845 276775



Sealand soggy toes!



The Sealand boot dryer comes with either a UK or a European plug.

... smelly boots a thing of the past. This nifty boot dryer by Sealand is an absolute revelation. Compact, effective, and the answer to an ongoing and soggy-toed problem! This clever little device, which fits in most boots, harnesses UV light to warm and dry out wet footwear. A night by the radiator is not only an insufficient drying method, but can often damage the leather, too. This fantastic gadget is easy to use, store, and can even be popped into dry shoes to warm them ready for a long day of shooting.

19

nduk.co.uk

One for the ladies

Designed to complement country clothing, this beautifully made tweed purse features a leather fastening and a brass-coloured popper with the Alan Paine logo stamped into it. It is satisfyingly sturdy and radiates quality. The beautiful range of multi-tonal, pure wool tweed colours will coordinate with almost anything; but we think it goes especially well with the Alan Paine wrap on the gifts for ladies page (p.44)...

RRP: £34.99

www.alanpaine.co.uk



Marvellous mugs

Mugs, like socks, are always fail-safe stocking fillers. Longthorne gunmakers have commissioned their own range of fine, English bone china mugs just in time for Christmas. The lovely scroll design is made to match the engraving on their Deluxe gun, and the heavy gilding adds a special touch of luxury to this modest little gift. Perfect for shooting friends and family, especially if they are Longthorne fans! The mug comes in a gift box.

RRP: £25.60

www.longthorneguns.com



Is it a scarf? Is it a tie?

No, it's the Alan Paine Aylsham men's choker! This great choker will have everybody on the shoot enquiring as to where it came from... the beautifully embroidered tonal Alan Paine logo might be a bit of a giveaway! An ideal stocking filler for any shooting gentleman, the Aylsham choker is made from luxurious fleece to keep necks warm in chilly breezes, and is a steal at £14.99. It comes in a range of lovely country colours – stay warm, look smart!

RRP: £14.99

www.alanpaine.co.uk



Belt up

We know, we know, Christmas is a time of expanding waistlines... not conducive to belt buying. However, once the last turkey and cranberry sandwich has been eaten, the last cracker pulled, and the New Year diet started in earnest, they'll shrink back down to their usual slender (!) proportions. And what better excuse is there than that to indulge in this beautiful, soft, quality dark leather belt. Spectacular in its simplicity yet robust and functional by nature, with the heavy brass-coloured buckle lending to the classic styling. The Moel leather belt by Seeland is a stocking filler that is not only useful, but special enough to provoke some excitement upon opening.

RRP: £29.99

www.seelanduk.co.uk



Squeaky little number

The Fox Call UK from A1 Decoy is billed as being the original and best. "Nothing squeaks them in like this call," say the makers. The call, which comes with a lanyard, is hands-free, so you can focus purely on shooting.

RRP: £11.99

www.a1decoy.co.uk



Timeless tipples

This beautiful hip flask from Harkila radiates quality and old-English charm. The stainless steel circular design, reminiscent of clay targets, is encased in chocolate leather through which a little round window of your chosen tipples peeks appealingly through. A copper and zinc mix popper fastening at the top, proudly bearing the Harkila brand, provides quick and easy opening for numb winter fingers. Give this wonderful, timeless gift to a discerning gentleman of the same persuasion.

RRP: £44.99

www.harkila.com



The Secret to Success

Two-time IGL winner and England Retriever Captain, David Latham has brought out the first in a series of training DVDs, being sold exclusively by Gundog Gear. The first one covers puppies up to six months or so and includes an exclusive interview with Dave, giving a fascinating insight into the mind and methods of a champion.

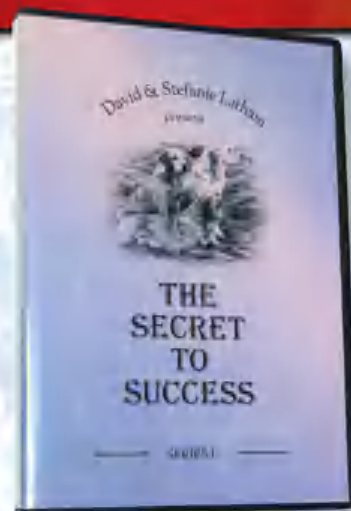
The Secret to Success shows you how to nurture and introduce your puppy to kennelling, bonding, hunting an area, recall, retrieving, introduction to water, introduction to the lead, introduction to the car box, first time in town, and equipment.

The DVD is well filmed and has a helpful index function at the start, which allows you to navigate straight to the section you wish to watch. David's calm and kind manner with the dogs really shines through and he explains the exercises in an easy to understand way that everyday gundog owners can relate to. He also explains how to overcome any problems that may crop up at this stage in training.

For anyone with a young puppy, particularly a Lab, this DVD will make essential viewing.

RRP: £29.50

www.gundoggear.co.uk



Venison – the game larder

Fifty mouth-watering recipes are accompanied by Steve Lee's breathtaking photographs in *Venison – the game larder* by José Souto, a book that would make the ideal gift for the cook in your life.

The book takes the reader on a journey from hillside to butcher's block to table, with sections on UK deer and stalking, and butchery and the various cuts of venison, then onto the recipes. Thirty of these come from José's own repertoire and the rest from guest chefs, such as Tom Kerridge, Cyrus Todiwala and Phill Vickery, who have chosen their favourite venison recipes, opening up a wide range of dishes, from simple venison lasagne to elegant dinner party showstoppers.

RRP: £25

www.merlinwin.co.uk



Cornish characters

Brought to you by Westcountry Films and the jolly boys of the shooting world, the Cornish Country Boys, this DVD is a real treat for wildfowling enthusiasts. The DVD features a wealth of topics such as advice, cuisine, art, gun testing, exploratory expeditions, and too many more to mention in detail. The Cornish Boys are proper characters and are their larger-than-life personalities and blinkered obsession with shooting sports make for very enjoyable viewing. It's perfect for settling down to in a cosy armchair on Boxing Day, with a turkey sandwich in one hand and a cheeky tipple in the other – bliss!

Total running time: 3 hours

RRP: £24.95

www.westcountryfilm.co.uk

Call Chris Green (The Original Cornish Country Boy) Tel: 01579 347538



The Labrador Theory

This book, by Cheever Hardwick, is a wonderfully revealing study of all things similar between man and dog, including the eagerness of the young pup, sporting prowess on the shooting field, personal habits, amorousness, and a healthy appetite to the inevitable slide towards middle-aged spread. All brilliantly illustrated with Alasdair Hilleary's hilarious cartoons, you will be taken on a crash course on the nature and nurture of Labradors, demonstrating just how similar and integral they are to our own human development.

RRP: £14.95

Available from Quiller Publishing and Muntjac Trading

www.quillerpublishing.com

www.muntjactrading.com

THE LABRADOR THEORY

by Cheever Hardwick



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GUN CABINETS



6 GUN CABINET WOOD EFFECT WITH INNER AMMO SAFE

Dimensions:

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- Suitable for shotguns / rifles
- Internal key locking inner ammo safe
- Red carpet lining throughout

Police Approved
Built to BS7558/92

£199.99 Inc VAT & Delivery



VAULT LOCKING 8 GUN CABINET WITH AMMUNITION SAFE

Dimensions:

Height 1430mm

Width 530mm

Depth 310mm

- Holds 8 shotguns / 6-8 scoped rifles
- Suitable for 4 x X-Long shotguns / rifles at the right hand side

£279.99 Inc VAT & Free delivery

GDK GUN BAG PRO

with integrated pop out stand.

AVAILABLE IN FULL
GUARDIAN LEATHER 50" & 54"

Leather colours available -
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LEATHER & CANVAS 50" & 54"
Canvas colours available -
Black or Green.

From £134.99 - £148.99

This is a brand new 2016 product,
but will be available from 24/11/15,
just in time for Christmas.

Please visit our website for full info.



GDK-179 GUNSLIP

- Suitable for 28-32" Barrels
- Longer lengths available
- Also available in TAN

£88.99 Inc Vat

CHECK OUT
OUR NEW
WEBSITE!

CLAY PIGEON TRAPS

FOR ALL CLAY PIGEON TRAPS, VIEW OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL DESCRIPTIONS AND VIDEOS.



BLACK WING PACKAGE DEAL

Includes:

- 50 Target black wing auto
 - 2 wheel trolley
 - ABT / DTL Wobbler kit
 - 70m wireless remote control
- Our GDK Black wing clay trap is our most popular starter machine. This package deal is the best option to save money on buying each of the above accessories individually.

£599.99 Inc VAT & Del

AERIAL ASSAULT CLAY TRAP

with 100m wireless remote control.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Target capacity | 50 targets |
| Distance | 70-80 Meters |
| Elevation | 0-70 degrees |
| Clay Type | Standard only (midi converter available) |
| Powered by | 12 volt battery (not included) |
| Warranty | 1 year |
| Weight | 28kg |
| Clay release | Comes with a cabled foot pedal release (6M cable) & 100m wireless hand remote control |



£429.99 Inc VAT & Del.

CLAY TRAP ACCESSORIES



£59.99
Inc VAT & Delivery

WIRELESS SYSTEM

70M Wireless hand remote



£189.99 Inc VAT & Delivery

SMALL WOBBLER KIT

Black wing clay trap, aerial assault clay trap, Black quail clay trap or any other branded clay trap under 50kgs. The small wobbler kit has 2 settings, DTL & ABT (down the line, and Automatic ball trap).



£99.99 Inc VAT & Delivery

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Gentle giant

This month's test gun, the Krieghoff Parours, arrives in these pages for the best of reasons – because I had heard good things about it. I have shot many K80s. When well sorted, they are excellent guns – chunky, but notably steady and efficient, clay-mashing machines. Based, externally at least, on the old Remington 32 as recreated in Germany, they have a reputation for solid quality and some characteristics which make them stand out from the modern pack. The angular, sliding, top-cover action, for example, is distinct in both profile and mechanism, as are the barrels on most K80s, which dispense with side ribs and are connected by a hanger at the muzzles that allows for point of impact changes (an especially useful feature for Trap shooters).

The Parours model, introduced a couple of years back, retains the well-proven sliding top action,

but has traditionally ribbed, fixed-choke 32" barrels. These are lighter for length than the previous Krieghoffs. Consequently, this model provides quicker handling than its stablemates. First impressions of the test Parours are still that it's a big beast, but quite an attractive one. Looking at its silver-finished action, you will note fairly bold scrollwork (many decorative options are, however, available). The rest of the specification includes an adjustable trigger with a well-shaped blade, a barrel selector forward of it (not combined with the safety as usually seen), and a lockable safety – a feature geared towards the needs of clay shots, although this might be considered a gun that is equally suitable for game. The Parours may also be fitted with an automatic safety making it more suitable for game shooting.

The test gun is generally well

presented with good-quality wood. The wood and metal have the competent fit and feel that one expects from an established maker offering a premium product. It feels solid and pointable. As for the aesthetics, I suspect it's a Marmite situation. Krieghoffs are distinctive, as noted, and there really is no mistaking their squarish lines, which have a sort of brutal, modernist elegance. To me, they look – like the Remingtons they're inspired by – very much products of the 20th-century machine age. But that is not necessarily a bad thing; it's part of the gun's character.

On the handling front, I have often found Krieghoffs to be pretty hefty. On first mounting this one, which

weighs in at about 8lbs, I immediately felt confident in its dynamics. The barrels are lively as well as long with sufficient weight to remain steady. Their length and reduced profile makes them pointable, too. They are of monobloc construction and fitted with conventional joining ribs, as noted. The sighting rib is fairly narrow at 6-8mm. Chambers are 3" (76mm) and are chrome lined. The barrels have an internal bore dimension of 18.6mm (wider than many and better for it) with longer than average forcing cones set forward from the chambers. The fixed chokes are $\frac{3}{4}$ and full (though Teagues would be a possibility). The barrel wall thicknesses are thinner

HISTORY

The K80 Krieghoff is an evolution of the K32, which itself is an ancestor of the once much coveted Remington 32. The Remington appeared in 1932 as their answer to the recently introduced Browning Superposed (which was first marketed circa 1929). The 32 was designed by Crawford Loomis. His new gun dispensed with conventional bolting and used a sliding top-piece instead. It also used a trunnion hinging system (the inspiration for which may have come from Boss and Woodward) as since adopted by Beretta and Perazzi, and just about everyone else save for Browning and Miroku. A prime advantage of this system is that it keeps action height down compared to guns with under-barrel lumps.

The 32 sold for under \$100 (less than the Browning), but required a lot of handwork and was discontinued after a decade of production (in which about 5,000 were made). After World War II, Remington sold the design and manufacturing rights to Krieghoff. Remington seem to have regretted their decision to sell off the 32, because, noting the success of Krieghoff, they introduced a 32 lookalike, the 3200, in the early 1970s. This was a different gun internally to the original. It was not a great commercial success, but continued in production until 1984. Valmet, Miroku and Marocchi have also produced sliding top-cover models (the Miroku was called the model 3000), as has Damon Petrick (under the Darne name) in France.





RRP
£9,555

KRIEGHOFF K80 PARCOURS

than ribless Krieghoffs because the stiffer, ribbed construction method allows for it.

Considering the pleasantly figured stock (and you can pay more to upgrade the wood further), the comb feels comfortable and is significantly higher than many Krieghoffs. The grip is of a sensible size, with not too tight a radius, and with a right-hand palm swell (much better than ambidextrous ones previously seen). Length of pull is 375mm with drop dimensions of 35 and 46mm at the nose of the comb and heel respectively. There is some right-hand cast – 6mm at the heel and 9mm at the toe. The fore-end is of an excellent new pattern, too, which fills the hand well and dispenses with a schnabel lip. The woodwork is hand chequered and oiled. A simple, but perfectly adequate, black recoil pad graces the rear of the butt. I might also mention here that a new stock bolt is available upon which up to three 40g balance weights may be placed.

The Krieghoff action is a bit different. The locking cover slides forward to engage with side wings on the barrels to lock the gun up. There are conventional trunnion-type hinging studs, upon which the bifurcated lump barrels pivot. The top lever is quite short, but the thumbpiece larger than average, offering good leverage and purchase. The sliding safety has a push-button lock. The barrel selector (a small lever) is positioned forward of the adjustable trigger within the trigger guard bow. The action body of the Parours, like other K80s, is based on a steel forging and has top and bottom straps, unlike many over-and-unders which mostly tend to be trigger-plate designs (Browning/Miroku being an exception). Hammers are powered by helical springs positioned, unusually, to the front, and are low and mainly concealed in the action body. This arrangement results in especially rapid lock times. ■

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

Though it is livelier than some Krieghoffs, this is still a big gun which requires a bit of upper body strength to shoot well. Balance is just forward of the hinge pin (where it should be on a 32" gun; long guns balanced out on the pin can feel ungainly). The Parours feels exceptionally pointable, and its narrow rib suited, too. Shooting the gun was an entirely positive experience. The tight fixed chokes munched clay birds decisively. The gun felt comfortable and the stock, with its reduced drop, contributed to low felt recoil along with the overall gun weight. Trigger pulls, which may be regulated to specification, were pleasantly crisp. The mechanical single trigger functioned well (though I was aware of its mechanism operating, and more so than in some other designs). Overall this is a well-sorted, much evolved gun, backed up by the first-class service offered by Alan Rhone. If I was buying a Krieghoff, this is the model I would opt for.

WE LIKE



- The light, long barrels
- The new, higher stock dimensions
- The handling dynamics

WE DISLIKE



- Not too sure about the action profile

TECH SPECS

- Make: Krieghoff
- Model: K80 Parours
- Bore: 12
- Barrels: 32"
- Chambers: 3" (76mm)
- Chokes: fixed – three-quarters and full
- Rib: 6-8mm
- Weight: 8lbs
- RRP: £9,555

UP CLOSE



The locking cover slides forward to engage with the side wings



Bold scrollwork decorates the silver-finished action



The sliding safety is fitted with a push-button lock



The adjustable trigger boasts a well-shaped blade

Mid-season marvels

Whatever your bore preference, Vic has a cartridge to fill the bag

Due to the exigencies of the publishing industry, this column is always a little in front of itself; however, by the time you read this the pheasant season will be in full swing and birds will be getting bigger, stronger and higher. Therefore, my cartridge selection this month, from the country's best-known manufacturers, features

'The 20-bore gun continues to grow in popularity and this is, in no small part, due to the ammunition industry producing ever more effective cartridges'

game loads that will enable you to make a handsome contribution to the bag, whatever your position in the line – pound seats or walking Gun.

1. ELEY ZENITH

Demonstrating once again that GB's longest established manufacturer is about more than just tradition, Eley have reached new heights of excellence with the introduction of their Zenith cartridge. Copper-plated shot ensures pellet deformation is reduced to the minimum, meaning the pattern holds together for longer and hits harder at greater range. On the pattern plate, results were as impressive as they are in the field, with 30g and 32g loads even more so. Available in 30g and 32g fibre wad 4, 5 and 6, £320-£342.

2. GAMEBORE BLACK GOLD DARK STORM

Gammore is another company that is always

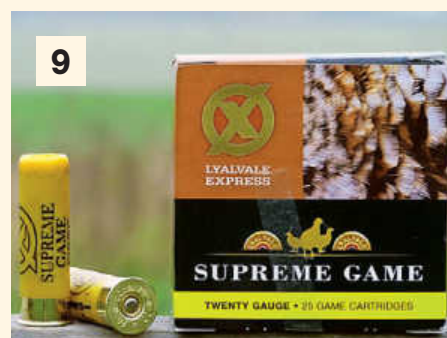
pushing the envelope in terms of performance and quality. Black Gold Dark Storm incorporates a combination of diamond hard shot, a fibre wad or a newly developed wool, which makes for an environmentally-friendly cartridge but at the same time provides ultra-fast, 1525fps long-range performance. Already a favourite of a number of high-pheasant specialists, it provides a standout performance in any company. Available in 30g and 32g fibre wad 4, 5 and 6, £295-£314 per 1,000.

3. HULL HIGH PHEASANT EXTREME

Few game cartridges enjoy the reputation that this cartridge has achieved for consistent quality and high performance. With December birds flying higher and stronger, this famous maker's 32g load sits in a class of its own. More pellets and increased velocity provides downrange hitting power, time after time. Available in 32g and



PICTURES: VIC HARKER



34g plastic and fibre wad 4, 5 and 6, £297.50-£315.50 per 1,000.

4. FIOCCHI PL34

Very much a cartridge for those high, wide and handsome pheasants that might otherwise escape, this 34g load from Italy is a real stopper. It is developed by one of the longest established manufacturers in the world, with a wealth of experience in producing shotgun cartridges for every purpose. For mid-season birds and beyond, keep some PL34 in your pocket for the really long ones. Available in 34g plastic wad 4, 5 and 6, £225 per 1,000.

5. E.J. CHURCHILL NEW GENERATION II HELLFIRE GAME

Manufactured by Gamebore to E.J. Churchill's specification, the copper-plated shot load avoids deformation in the barrel so that more pellets reach the bird. This can be seen on the plate and via the benefits experienced in the field. This is a very effective load and suitable for use in best English guns. Available in 30g and 32g fibre wad 4, 5 and 6, £382-£416 per 1,000.

6. LYALVALE EXPRESS SPECIAL GAME

Another superb cartridge for lightweight English guns from this redoubtable English manufacturer. With a genuine 2½" case, moderate ballistics and clean-burning Vectan powder, this cartridge is a real bag filler. The devotees of this cartridge swear by its performance, and after putting some through my venerable boxlock, I could see why. For those who shoot a lot of cartridges through a light English gun, this load is the one. Available in 30g and 32g plastic and fibre wad 5, 6 and 7, £248-£275 per 1,000.

The 20-bore game gun continues to grow in popularity and this is, in no small part, due to the ammunition industry producing ever more effective cartridges. For the already dyed-in-the-wool small-bore enthusiast, or the shooter going down a bore size this season, the next three cartridge offerings will not fail to impress.

7. HULL HIGH PHEASANT EXTREME

Sharing all the virtues of its 12-bore big brother, this smaller gauge still packs an impressive punch and, at the same time, is equally

well mannered with a suitably moderate recoil. For the small-bore aficionado, who wants to keep up with the big shots, he could hardly do better. Available in 30g fibre wad 5 and 6, £285 per 1,000.

8. E.J. CHURCHILL HELLFIRE GAME

The junior member of the Hellfire Club is as lively a performer as the senior member. With its high performance and low recoil, it is very suitable for use by the fairer sex shooting 20-bores. Available in 30g and 32g fibre wad 4 and 5, £340-£402 per 1,000.

9. LYALVALE EXPRESS SUPREME GAME

This premium grade 20-bore cartridge with a 30g shot load really does make a case for using the smaller calibre game gun. At any sensible range you are never going to be under-gunned, and the lighter, faster handling gun really does make sense for some shooters, male and female, especially with this excellent load from Express. Available in 30g and 32g fibre wad 5 and 6, £292-£313 per 1,000. ■

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Radical reform

The image of a Scottish farmer breaking down in tears at the prospect of losing the land he has worked so hard to maintain adds an emotional tone to Scotland's Land Reform Bill debates

The movement towards further land reform in Scotland has attracted much attention; but does the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill authorise a Zimbabwean-style land-grab, metaphorical or otherwise? The Scottish government may have published 'radical' proposals, aimed at widening the ownership and diversity of land use across the country, but understanding what effect land reform may have on Scotland's population and economy involves, first of all, understanding what land reform is actually about.

Contrary to much of the land-reformists' rhetoric, it is not a process of simply removing all lands deemed to be unjustly owned, à la Zimbabwe in 1980. It is a process of reforming the legal, fiscal and administrative framework governing all land in Scotland. It is about how land is owned, occupied, taxed, inherited, and used. Complex, to say the least!

How land is owned, used and governed is vitally important to the wellbeing of Scotland, with a healthy bias towards those who live and work thereon. Scotland's iconic landscapes are all too often sold as wild and untamed, which is, by and large, untrue. Much of the land in question is managed sensitively and sustainably through tried-and-tested methods, to produce employment opportunities and greatly needed income sources to facilitate and support the establishment of rural communities.

The Scottish Countryside Alliance, like so many organisations representing sustainable land use,

supports the Scottish government in its objectives, while reserving the right to a different approach to achievement.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill begins by providing for a 'land rights and responsibilities statement' and a new Scottish Land Commission to ensure fairness over land ownership and use. To which many have applied the line: 'Land that is a finite resource should be owned and used in the public interest for the common good of all the people of Scotland' – whatever that means! In reality, the Land Reform Bill is a beast of many heads with many meanings to as many people.

Controversial or otherwise, after a vigorous debate, delegates voted against a motion welcoming the introduction of the Scottish government's Land Reform Bill by 570 votes to 440, rejecting the Scottish government plans to widen the ownership of land across Scotland for not being radical enough.

One image sums up, for me, the extraordinary events that took place in Aberdeen – that of weeping tenant farmers. A stunned silence filled the church hall when tenant farmer, Andrew Stoddart addressed the 300-odd attendees of the Our Land meeting. He explained that he faced eviction from the land he'd farmed for 22 years, and that he would receive little compensation, despite investing nearly half a million pounds in Colstoun Mains Farm over that period. The previous night Andrew had appeared on *Channel 4 News*, interviewed by Alex Thomson, as part of

a report on land reform in Scotland. When asked what his children will say about the situation, he broke down in tears.

Memories of clearances, and current battles with derelict land and evictions give the debate an emotive tone – sometimes helpful, sometimes not. Rightly or wrongly, land reform has become one of the central issues in the nationwide discussion on Scotland's future; but it is one in which we should not be held to ransom by the hugely emotional experiences of individual cases.

It is a convenient narrative for those who see land reform as a crusade to break up estates, which they perceive as a throwback to a bygone era. However, it is a distortion of reality and a view that is serving the interests of rural Scotland very poorly. The argument that changing the pattern of land ownership, by breaking up estates and expropriating land from some landowners to give to others, is fundamentally flawed. This land reform debate needs to focus on land use, not land ownership.

It is unlikely that the move will affect the passage of the Bill at this stage. However, the SNP activists' public outcry demonstrated that there is still time for the Scottish government to listen to feedback from its call for evidence, and subsequent analysis from its committees and parliament as a whole.

As with all land reform measures, these will ultimately be judged by the effect they have on the landscape itself. ■



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Thirteen, unlucky for some

Furrier recounts hilarious, heart-warming gundog tales of two unforgettable canine colleagues, now sadly passed

Every Christmas you see those adverts and posters that say 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas.' This always strikes a chord with me as I remember past canine colleagues and some of the more amusing anecdotes about their antics. These stories, left with me by two very memorable gundogs, will hopefully jog some memories of your own close confidants, the loyal work they carry out, and the way they continually heighten our enjoyment of the sport.

'He dogged-in fastidiously for years, although he was a late starter in retrieving and was four before he smugly swam out to retrieve a duck'

While in Essex and helping out with keeping duties on a farm shoot, I was given an English springer spaniel pup – a breed I always swore never to have anything to do with. The shoot captain couldn't cope with him; it didn't help that he had been spoilt every night since he'd left his mother with a hot-water bottle and a supper of condensed milk. From day one he was a character, careering around the house before collapsing to sleep, as many pups do.

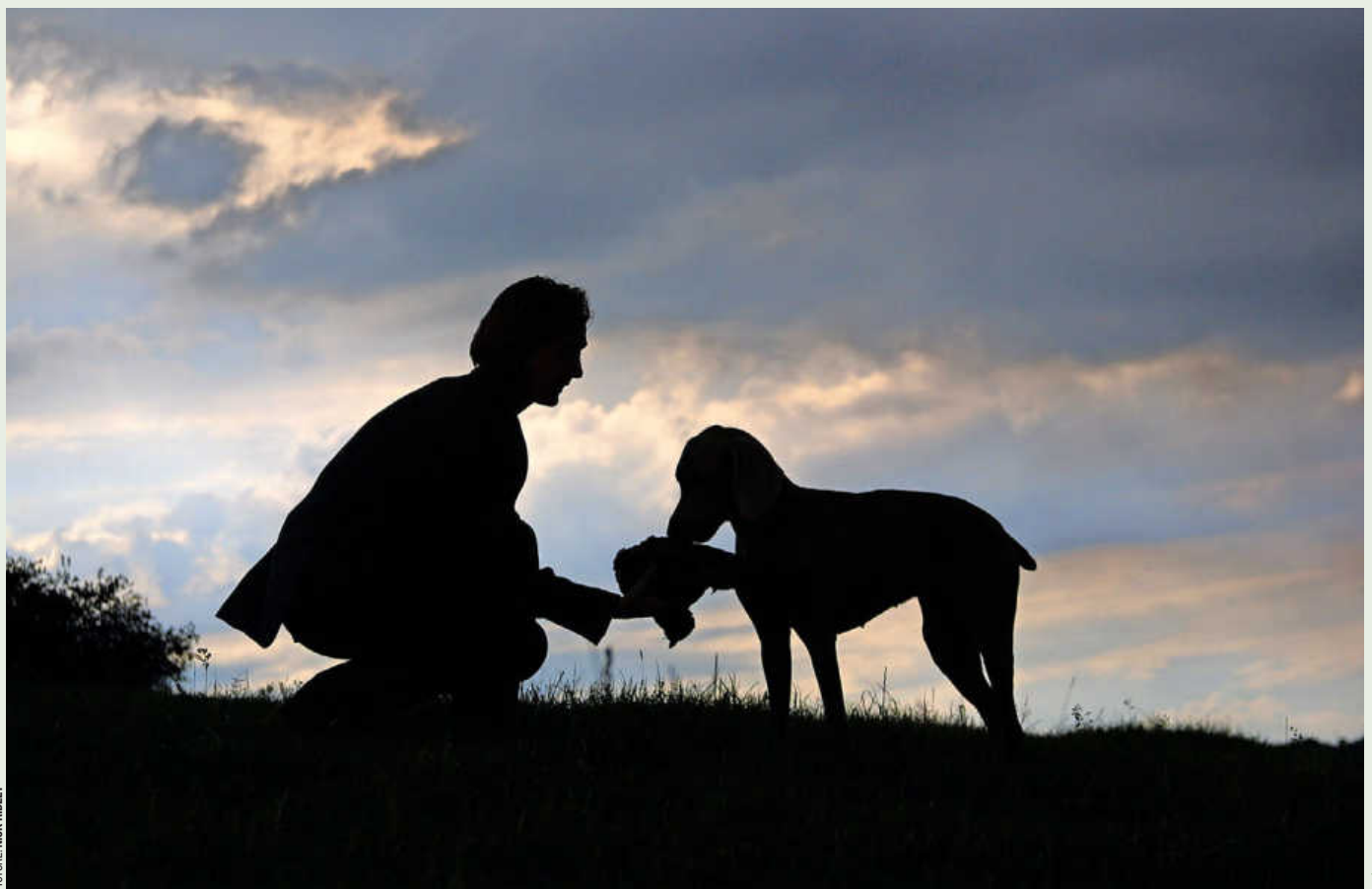
There is a good lesson to be learnt here, and a very good reason why one should not have dogs loose in the front seats of vehicles. In his early weeks, during the summer months, he was travelling on the front seat loose. He decided to crawl onto my lap just as I was wrestling the wire wheel of the old Series 2 Land Rover in an attempt to keep it on the road. He hunkered down and then quietly and quickly sunk his rapier sharp puppy teeth through the material of my shorts and into my scrotum; now, that certainly wakes one up, and I struggled even more to stay on the road with him attached!

On another occasion, the spaniel pup, having

been left in the car asleep as my wife did some gardening work, got himself into more mischief. The client, in a rush and unable to find my wife to pay her, popped the cash through the open window of the car, only for my wife to return a few minutes later to find the £50 note being devoured by the pup and only just retrievable by the final corner poking out of his mouth.

Having moved from Essex, I contacted the local gamekeeper and was duly invited to beat on his first day of the season, so I happily turned out with the spaniel, now in his middle years. We were beating close to the keeper as it was new ground, and the dog was quartering well, slightly in front of both of us, until a French partridge flushed out of the kale, only to be followed by an athletically soaring spaniel who proceeded to pluck it out of the sky a metre or so above the crop!

He was 13 at his demise and, having said I would never have an English springer spaniel, he was a godsend. He dogged-in fastidiously for many years, although he was a late starter in retrieving and reached the age of four before he very smugly swam out to retrieve a duck.



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY



To ensure an extra income for the estate the duck ponds were stocked with carp – goldfish to be precise – to be grown-on for sale in garden centres. To reduce damage to the fish by cormorants, the aqua culturist criss-crossed the ponds with tennis-type nets.

After every shoot day, especially if we had shot the ducks, it was necessary to sweep the banks and adjoining fields and woods for dead or wounded duck, which could be confidently predicted to add another 10% to the previous day's bag. Wounded, flightless ducks would be shot to ensure they wouldn't tie the remaining healthy birds to the water on the following shoot days. On this particularly frosty winter morning, whilst mopping up the wounded with the aid of my black Labrador, a drake was shot and lay in the water on the far side of the pond. The dog jumped from the back box of the quad bike and entered the water, only for me to realise too late that he would swim straight into the cormorant net that was strung across the pond at its surface. No amount of gesticulating and whistling could stop him, so he ploughed on, getting his head and forelegs through it before being forced to halt, whereupon he just continued to tread water and look more and more frustrated at not reaching his quarry.

A number of rescue plans ran through my mind, but there was no boat. Would it be possible to cut

the far end of the net and drag him back? Perhaps there was the risk of drowning him with the nets' weight? Finally biting the bullet, I stripped down to my long john thermals on that cold, frosty morning, and left the rest of my clothes on the quad. Far from solved, next there was the problem of how to get him free. Rambo-like, I grasped my pocket Opinel in my teeth, there being no other feasible place to store it, and gingerly entered the water. The air was forced from my lungs with the bitter cold; I must have been crazy! Swimming the 15 or 20 metres to the now frantic Labrador entangled in the net, I took the knife and cut the nylon from around him, as he splashed and scrabbled at my chest and limbs with his paws and claws. Once he was free, I turned and swam slowly back to the bank, only to be greeted by the same puzzled Labrador, stood looking back into the water from the bank with the duck in his mouth, as if to say, 'What are you doing in there?' Now freezing, the cold air almost drying me, I struggled back into my dry clothes and returned home, wrapping myself in a duvet to warm up and going straight to bed. It was only then, whilst reliving the events of the morning, that I pondered where my long johns were – now nowhere to be seen!

The lesson to be learnt from this last story is to ensure your dog is steady to the shot. If he had been, he could have been sent on the retrieve

Happily, Furrier's English springer spaniel changed his perception of the breed



from the right side of the net. Thank goodness that the only thing that was lost that time was my winter undergarments. We had many more less-cold sporting forays before he, too, died at the age of 13. ■



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

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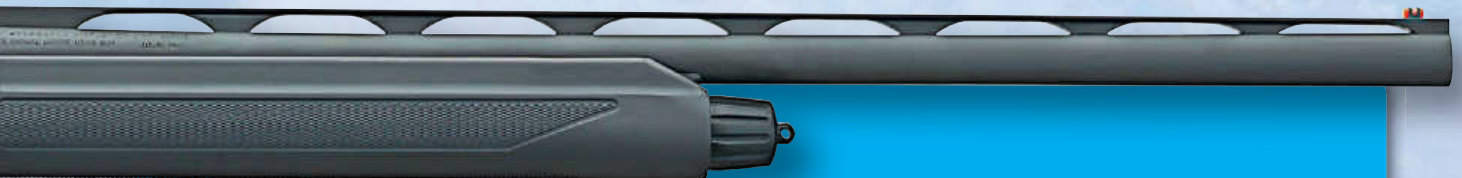
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Vertex

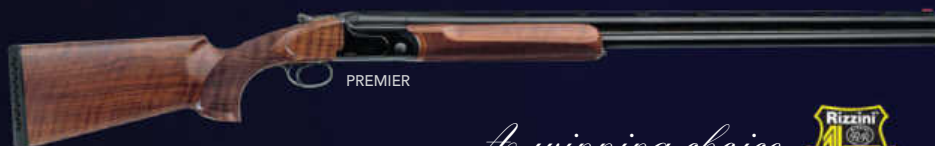
The Vertex, with its tricolour striped action and fancy chequering, is a true competition gun with an unashamed Italian flavour. The reinforced action sides make it perfectly suitable for intensive use and the 3" will happily digest any ammunition you choose to put through them. The heavy barrels are offset by a sporting stock, which is fitted as standard with an adjustable comb, allowing the user to set it to the optimum shooting position.

Premier

As its name suggests, this model is very much in first position in the competition range of Rizzini guns. The reinforced action is finished in classic business-like black chrome with the model name neatly engraved on the underside. The competition stock is made from well-figured oil finished walnut. Thanks to its excellent balance and handling, the Premier is also finding a keen following amongst specialist high bird shots.



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Wild goose chase

Christmas is coming; the geese are getting fat; and Alan receives a phone call that rekindles fond memories of his own festive goose-chasing endeavours

A call came from the owner of a local farm shop. The farm in question has been the scene of great carnage by myself against the hordes of corvids which frequent the place – numbers of which are now greatly reduced! “Can you get me a wild goose? A customer has asked for one.” A freebie, of course, as the sale of wild geese is still illegal. The reply was simple: “I’ll see what I can do.”

For my own part, I can only think of one Christmas over the last few years when we have

not sat down to wild goose for dinner – even if it is augmented by turkey for the sake of the rest of the family. The dark, rich meat is, for me, a delight when set against the paler fare so enjoyed by others. The call set me thinking about those escapades as the New Year approached, when geese were uppermost in the mind. As ever with wildfowling, some were fruitful; others less so. However, when success did come it was all the better for that.

There was the chance encounter with a single

Canada goose. Waiting by the river for dawn to push through was an inspiring, if luckless, exercise. Plenty of geese passed well off to the west, and it seemed like it was going to be a blank flight. Finally, from the far side of the river, a great shape flipped low over the bank and swung past me, before crumpling gently into the moving water at the shot. The dog had it back in no time, and it was not a blank flight after all.

Waiting in the moonlight for geese to flight can be a wonderful and frustrating experience in equal

‘As if rewarding my decision to stay put, a small skein passed across a break in the cloud’



measures. On one particular night, the cloud cover was heavy, with a brooding light that came and went. This inevitably meant that there was no consistent movement of the greylags: when the cloud was 10/10 all went quiet; when the cloud broke a little, geese could be heard moving. Just occasionally, their great shapes could be picked out, but always too far to one side or the other. But the geese were there, out on the roost, and the hours ticked by without a shot breaking the tranquillity of the night.

The moderate wind from the north-east was the only sound as it sighed past, but even then there was nothing more than a slight chill in the air; hunkered into a tiny creek, I was comfortable enough. Once or twice the thought of moving occurred to me, but it can often be fatal to move when in pursuit of geese. Invariably it's better to

'The dogs were delighted to be freed from their unmoving vigil and, after a brief tussle for the prize, had the bird back to me'

stay put lest a skein passes over your recently vacated position. As if rewarding my decision to stay put, a small skein passed across a break in the cloud. It was the decision of but a moment – whether to fire or not – but the shot was on. A moment later a great bird came slanting down, and the long vigil had been worthwhile.

One year, a few days before Christmas, pink-feet were the attraction. The wind blew quite hard from the south-west and it was not possible to hear whether any geese were on the roost to the north. As the light strengthened, a couple of small parties of greylag passed well wide of me. The odd duck passed through, but with the wind blowing out towards the goose roost it would have been foolish to fire, and risk putting any roosting birds to premature flight.

It was a long wait, and just when it seemed that the roost was unoccupied a huge ball of geese rose, their wild cries coming faintly against the wind. They, too, passed well wide, forming into ragged skeins as they headed inland to feed. Their cries became stronger as they crossed the wind. Even if there had not been a chance, it had still been a wonderful experience. However, shortly after, another small skein left the roost, and this time they came on nicely, heading right for me. They made hardly a sound, and if they held their line a shot would be on.

Eventually, the chance was in range, and a bird collapsed in front, whilst the other two shots were

The common domesticated goose, traditionally enjoyed at Christmas, is a descendant of the greylag



PICTURE: DAVID MASON

futile efforts to collect a second. The dogs, too, were equally delighted to be freed from their unmoving vigil and, after a brief tussle for the prize, had the bird back to me. Even as the dogs went I knew it was a European white-front, and when it was presented to me, it was with great delight that the adult bird was grasped. It was a real beauty – resplendent with those black breast markings and a crisp white forehead.

It was stowed tenderly into my rucksack and then it was back to the car for a bite to eat. My work was done. I had my Christmas goose. ■



A single Canada goose was an unexpected end to an otherwise fruitless flight

PICTURE: TIDEPOOL

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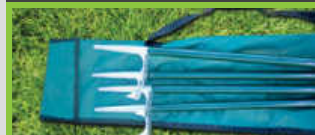
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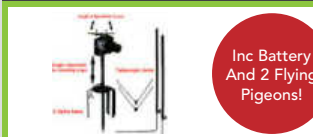
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A tribute to Douglas

Rupert Butler recalls his fondest memories of his father, from the first time he was allowed to shoot a gun, to the many unforgettable adventures they shared in the pursuit of game

The overriding image I will always hold of Dad is of him disappearing over some distant peak, the wind tugging at his tousled hair, shirtsleeves rolled up and a German pointer ranging effortlessly in front. Grouse were always his favourite. He loved the haunting melody of the wigeon, the silence of the woodcock, the clamour of grey geese overhead, but he would have swapped them all for a hazy day in early September on the Knockmealdown mountains in South Tipperary. He loved those mountains like no other. Family aside, I doubt he was ever happier than when out on those high peaks.

I was seven when first allowed to fire a shotgun. Because my arms were too short, Dad had to stand behind me and hold the fore-piece. I was shaking with trepidation as I pulled the trigger. The next thing I knew I was sitting on my backside with a large grin on my face. Dad looked down smiling for he knew I was hooked – and hooked I was.

In the years that followed, we travelled the countryside together in search of game. We listened to the songs of the wigeon as they descended from the heavens, to the crackle of woodcock as they rose from frost-encrusted

bracken, to the thunderous noise of a thousand grey geese as they circled overhead, to the cackle of an old cock grouse as he disappeared effortlessly over some old peat hag.

On a lighter note, I have to say that he did manage to shoot me three times over the course of the years. Before you are totally horrified, they were all ricochets, or so I'm told! The most notable of these happened when I was about 12. Firing at a fast departing rabbit, Dad's shot bounced off some boulder or other, proceeding to splatter yours truly with upwards of 30 pellets.

'He loved the haunting melody of the wigeon, the silence of the woodcock, and the clamour of grey geese overhead'

Because I was at the other side of the hedge at the time, I thought I had been shot properly. I rolled around on the ground shouting and carrying-on, until finally realising I was reasonably intact. I did have to go for an X-ray, for a couple of pellets had buried themselves rather deeper than others in my knee. You can imagine the radiographers face when she enquired as to what had happened. I simply replied: "Dad shot me."

As is the case with us all eventually, Dad's legs began to slow, causing him quite a predicament for he was no longer able to follow his beloved grouse. Not to be deterred, he set about creating some duck ponds down at the farm, ones which have proved a great distraction for him in latter years. Aside from the resident mallard and influx of winter migrants, it was a place where friends could meet. These ponds did also produce two of the more humorous incidents we've had in all our ramblings. They involved two good friends of his, Philip Walsh and John D Condon.

The first was on a sultry September evening as we were trying to bag an early-season mallard or two. Out of nowhere I heard a terrible commotion, and the aforementioned Philip came running



Douglas was never happier than when he was spending time on his beloved Knockmealdown mountains



Douglas was an esteemed member of his local gun club

across the field at a rate of knots, de-robing as he went. I must admit, I thought he had finally lost the plot. It turned out that he had shot a mallard into a clump of rushes and his, normally reliable, retriever would not pick it up – with good reason as it turned out. The mallard in question had fallen into a nest of wasps. You can picture the scene now. Philip running like a lunatic with a large swarm in hot pursuit. Dad actually got some great pictures but decided to delete them, much to my annoyance.

The other incident involved John D Condon and was equally as funny. One bitter December evening, while waiting beside one of the smaller ponds, he heard a rush of wings overhead. Out of the fading light appeared two mallard, one of which he managed to drop at the second time of asking. Falling belly up in the middle of the pond, John D decided that it may deter future arrivals and proceeded to go and pick it up. Thinking that there was no more than a foot or so of water in the pond, he waded out quickly. What he didn't realise was that Dad, while constructing the pond, had asked the digger man to dig a smaller hole in the middle which reached down to the water table some seven feet below. You can imagine what happened next. All that was left of John D was his hat floating beside the mallard. Brother Paul was asked by somebody further away as to what John D was doing and he quickly retorted: "The back stroke, I think."

So there we go; my beloved Dad has gone to find some new shooting opportunities high above. He will no doubt have everything arranged when we come to visit. I have many great memories which I will cherish in the years to come. He was my shooting companion, my dad and my friend. We're going to miss him terribly. I'm going to miss him. ■



Douglas (centre) with his sons



Douglas kept himself busy in latter years by building two duck ponds on the farm

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Height of absurdity

At what point is a sporting target still sporting, and how high is high? These and other dilemmas pose questions for Adam Smith – but does he have any answers?

I have to admit, I very nearly went off half-cocked on this one – which just goes to show that you shouldn't jump to conclusions without all the facts. That said, 'the facts' are capable of all sorts of interpretations, and although that's not a particularly unique conclusion, the decision will still lie with you.

Thumbing through the latest issue, skimming over Dick Jones's words of wisdom on high pheasants and how to cope with them, I had

reached the point where he talked of suitable loads – starting with 36g no.4s – when a red mist descended, bringing my absorption of the rest of the article to an abrupt conclusion. This was wrong.

But, what I should have done was read through to the end, and thus discover that the writer had rather more balanced views than I had first given him credit for. Not, I have to add, views with which I have a great deal of sympathy, but at least the

points were made with the option for the reader to agree or disagree, rather than dogmatic preaching.

So, while entirely valid cases were made for correct footwork, gun fit and gun choice, when it came to cartridges, it was conceded that not so many years ago, loads which seem to be increasingly approved and even required today were then confined to the foreshore. Of course, there remain very good reasons for such loads as 40g no.3s being regarded as suitable for bringing down birds that tip the scales at twice, and frequently three or four times, the weight of a full-grown cock pheasant, but that only begs a few more questions.

At what point did it become acceptable to fire loads like these at pheasants? At what point did it become acceptable, even required, to present birds at such extreme ranges that only extreme loads could be expected to bring them down cleanly? At what point did game shooters assume a degree of arrogance that demanded ever greater tests, above and beyond the skills that had been agreed and established over many, many decades? And at what point did game shooting, as a sport and industry, reach the conclusion that it would be acceptable for birds to be shot at in the hope, rather than expectation, of clean kills?

Of course, these parameters can just as well be applied to run-of-the-mill shoots the length and breadth, because clean humane shooting depends on ability just as much as choice of gun and cartridge. The problem, I believe, is to start to think that for exceptionally high birds a shortcut, such as using the right gun – heavy, highly choked and long barrelled – with a massive cartridge, might be the answer.

Part of the problem is a man thing. Just as none of us would ever concede that faults of any kind could be picked in one's driving abilities, it would be equally silly to suggest that a pheasant at a height which makes it look more like a starling is beyond our capabilities. No, that's not to be countenanced, so the answer is simply to hurl a massive amount of lead at higher than normally accepted velocities in order to achieve... what? A 1:5 kill ratio? And what vetting procedure is there in place to set this as an acceptable average?

A mate of mine, a well above average shot, visits the high tower at Roundwood most weeks so he's got quite good at hitting tiny targets at extreme range. At 145ft, it's the highest tower in the UK so straight birds are just under 50 yards up, but factor in any sort of rise and angle and you're talking 60 yards or more – which is about



PICTURES: DAVID WILLIAMS

These birds look quite high, but are well presented

the same sort of distance as the pheasants we're talking about. He uses 28g no.7 or 7.5 through ½ choke and breaks rather more than his fair share but, just as with other aspects of clay shooting, such top shots are becoming increasingly challenged and intrigued by variations in speed and angle, recognising that sometimes range simply becomes a lottery.

Now I know that many will now be bouncing up and down, saying, 'But that's clays, birds are different...' and I would reply that it remains a question of ballistics. Yes, a clay is a brittle target, and while a visible chip is all that's needed to register a hit, it is also significantly smaller – most especially at any angle other than directly overhead – and yet the vast majority of such birds are not chipped, but are shattered because of the simultaneous impact of several shot. Again, yes, these shot are small, and in the context of high pheasants, too small, but they are effective, and there are several reasons for this. One – a vital factor – is the very high number that will actually reach the target thanks to their protection within a plastic shot cup, which has minimised the number of pellets distorted or damaged in their passage down the bore. So there are more pellets, of which more are concentrated into the pattern thanks to fewer fliers. Contrast this with the fibre-wadded shells which are increasingly insisted on at most game shoots, and there's already a disparity that may not have been considered or allowed for. Another factor is the charge behind the load, an amount of powder needed for effective velocity without blowing holes in the pattern – which again results in a higher concentration of pellets reaching the target.

But what constitutes an effective-sized pellet? The difference between the fall of a wing-shot bird, side-slipping down, and a heart- or lung-shot bird, gliding on motionless wings, and a head-shot bird which folds instantly to the shot, are clear. The head shot is the cleanest and most humane because the skull is not much thicker than a ping-pong ball, even its lower surfaces, compared to the heart and lungs, hidden behind four or five centimetres of muscle and then bone. So one pellet, even a no.6 – though a no.5 will create an acceptable compromise – will kill cleanly if it hits the brain. Surely it makes sense to deliver as many pellets as possible into this area, to create a higher probability of success? They

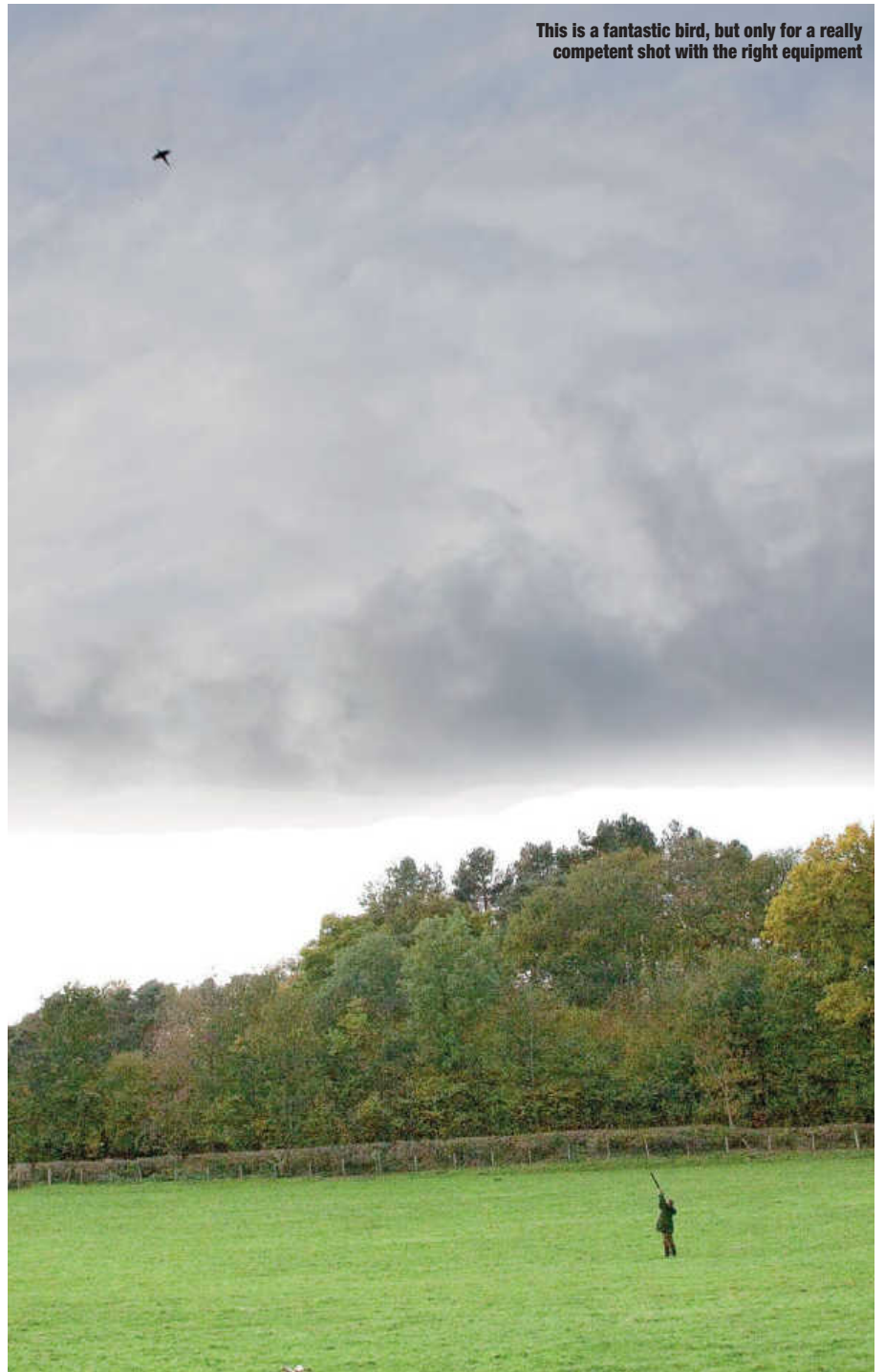
don't need the extra inertia and weight of no.3s or 4s; they don't need the massive velocity of a 40g load; they simply need to penetrate a millimetre or two. Job done, credit achieved, credibility retained.

In the final analysis, you could say – well, I could, anyway – that there's something inherently wrong with the approach to modern high-pheasant shooting on some estates. In fact, pushing the parameters of height and range to their extremes and beyond tells us more about some of the people who shoot today than perhaps they would prefer or accept – they might, for

example, be the sort whose main preoccupation is in deciding what colour Ferrari to have this year...

But there was a time when sportsmanship took pride of place. And to think that sportsmanship means accepting one's limitations, and treating a living creature with the respect it deserves and demands, rather than simply as a target, is to any shooter's credit. And if that means going through life with a gun that will never be shot off its face, and without the need of a physiotherapist to massage damaged shoulder muscles, well, I'd be happy with that. And so, I believe, would the majority of my fellow shooters. ■

This is a fantastic bird, but only for a really competent shot with the right equipment



'You could say that there is something inherently wrong with the approach to modern high-pheasant shooting on some estates'

Conservation concerns

Brimming with Welsh pride, despite the rugby results, Helena takes a look at the future of our sport's foundations – our beautiful, perishable little patch of countryside

My disappointment about Wales being knocked out of the Rugby World Cup, despite the team's valiant efforts, was somewhat assuaged by two of the principality's clay shooters at the World ICTSF English Sporting Clay Shooting Championship, held in October at Valley View Gun Club in South Africa. Overall champion was Pembrokeshire-based Martin Myers, while Ben Sutton, also from Pembrokeshire, won the Juniors. Both were shooting for the England Team, but I think congratulations are in order for this superb display from two of Wales's top shots.

Also on the clay front, the highly popular annual BASC .410 World Championships saw high scores in challenging conditions at Mid Wales Shooting Centre. Tim Smith from Herefordshire took the world title and High Gun in the open pool with a superb 45/50. Junior High Gun went to Holly Pennington with 40/50, and Lady High Gun was Linda Pearson, who hung on to the title she won last year with 41/50.

Not surprisingly, the 50-bird Sporting layout, put on by Arthur and Jonathan Williams who run Mid Wales Shooting Centre, was testing but fair, leading to a tough competition with some good scores.

David Scott of Gamebore, the main event sponsor, commented: "We are delighted to sponsor such a keenly fought competition and, as the scores show, a .410 with the right cartridges can give impressive results."

Meurig Rees, BASC Wales Country Officer, who has run the event since 2006, added: "This is an ever-growing competition and to have the support of the ground owners, who have already confirmed their commitment to the event in 2016, of Gamebore and of other prize givers and competitors means I see a very positive future."

BASC council member and chairman of BASC's Welsh committee, Jono Garton, who also runs Bodfuan Shoot on the Llyn Peninsula in

motorised recreation, it is vital that proper safeguards are put in place to protect management, other uses and wildlife. The organisation says that there is already sufficient public access in Wales, and government should now focus on maintaining it, raising awareness of it and encouraging people to use it. For example, at the moment many footpaths are overgrown or underused; these should be properly maintained and, where possible, joined to create circular

'BASC draws attention to the serious economic and environmental consequences of opening up woodland'

North Wales, said: "This has now become a major event in the shooting calendar and shows just how effective a .410 can be in the right hands. It's often a first gun for young people and we are glad to be able to promote it and develop our sport."

Improvement not extension

The Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on public access to land in Wales has seen a response from BASC, stating that there should not be a right of recreation to all land in Wales. Instead, BASC is calling for improvement of existing access, as well as more opportunities for recreational shooting in state-owned forests.

BASC is keen to stress that while it supports responsible use of land and water for non-

walks ensuring that existing opportunities can be fully enjoyed before creating new ones.

BASC is also concerned that shooting is unfairly treated with regards to leases for shooting rights over government-owned forestry. This realisation seems to be at odds with the government's stated aims for new access, which recognise the economic benefit from recreational activity. Shooting is worth £75 million a year to the Welsh economy; more game shooting and deer stalking leases should be available.

BASC draws attention to the serious economic and environmental consequences of opening up woodland, which would have a major impact on shoot management, and it maintains that on inland waters and the coast there is already sufficient access.

Derek Williams, from the Welsh branch of the association, commented: "Shooting already provides access to the countryside for many thousands of people. It enriches their lives and alongside the recreational value produces significant economic and environmental benefits. Councils say that, because of government cutbacks, they do not have the resources to fully promote and maintain the existing network of footpaths, so adding to their burden makes no sense at all."

Chairman of the BASC Wales committee, Jono Garton said: "We certainly support the notion of more people getting out and enjoying the countryside, but it has to be done responsibly. Since the current access facility is so little used you have to question the wisdom of extending access, especially when it has the potential to damage the countryside and wildlife that attract people in the first place. Instead, the government should encourage sustainable use and the kind of beneficial recreation that shooting provides."

Wise words. ■

Right of recreation to all land in Wales could pose a risk to management, other uses and wildlife





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ONE FOR THE POT

Look around you

Make more of your shoot days this season with some subtle foraging, says Tim Maddams. You'll never look at a maize cover crop in the same way again...

I love the early pheasant season, partly because for many it marks the beginning of the winter routine that has been eagerly awaited for months. The start of the season brings with it hopes and dreams, new people on the shoots, new plans, dogs and guns to be tested, tales to be told and fun to be had.

Though, from a foodie point of view, it's not really the pheasants that I am most excited about at this time. I like pheasant meat a lot more once we hit mid November and the birds have a much wilder feel to them and are a little more fully grown; what they gain in flavour, though, as the season moves along, they will certainly begin to lose in texture. As is the case in many things, you can't do with an older bird what you can with a young one, but to overlook the benefits of either is foolish. As a general rule, a late-November hen bird is the best bird for roasting. I wouldn't attempt to roast a cock bird much past the end of

November, but the hens will be in with a chance of the hot pan then oven treatment until after mid winter and maybe, just maybe, into the new year, but not very far.

Anyway, more about pheasant as we get further into the season. My thoughts this month will be as much about the other things to be found in the woods, as they will be for the game. You see, I am a little bit mischievous, and my love of wild food has combined with the fun of beating to create a sort of hybrid activity. Though my focus will be on keeping in line and not flushing birds too soon and shouting at my dog, this will all go out of the window the second I spy some tasty mushrooms or some sloes or nuts or crab apples. Often when there is a lull at the beginning of a drive or between drives, I like to disappear just into the woods; often these woods are never foraged in, by humans anyway, as the gamekeeper won't want the cover disturbed, and

rightly so, but as we're talking about foraging this month, I can just about pretend that I have permission for a little woodland larceny. Anyone who has ever wondered why I always take a game bag beating is blissfully unaware of the large plastic tubs contained within. It is often remarked that I am late to the end of a drive and again the poor old dog will take the blame, though of course the old hands know full well that I have been 'filling my boots' and will be looking for a share of the spoils to go with their end-of-day brace.

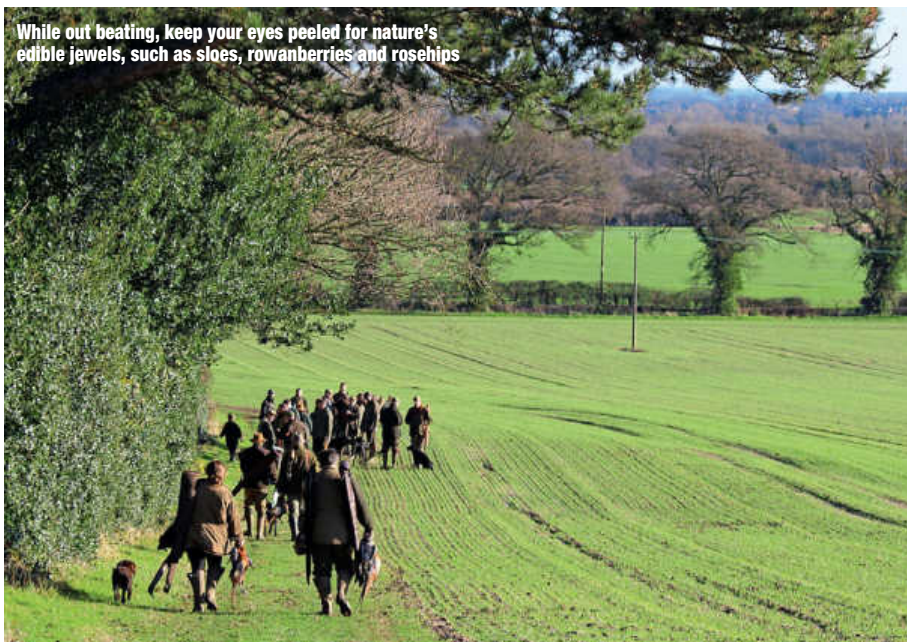
The rough stuff

When out rough shooting, things are even better as I can legitimately call a halt to the proceedings and enlist the whole party's help in collecting a few mushrooms or fruits and nuts. I am, however, often very surprised that there aren't more people who shoot that are into the foraging side of things. It's a big part of the whole thing for me and if I can find (as I did last year) a large cauliflower fungus, then I am jolly well going to stop for a moment and pick it up; a single specimen can provide enough fungus for several meals and goes very well indeed with pheasant, partridge and duck.

If wild food, particularly mushrooms, puts you off – and understandably, as the wrong fungi in the pan could well be the end of you so you need to know what you are looking for (though I have found my fellow Guns and beaters more than keen to learn!) – you may be surprised at just how much game cover can provide you with a tasty snack. I am often pinching a few leaves of kale, or a head or two of maize, but I'm just as happy with a few rape tops or the odd stubble turnip; what harm is there in helping myself to a garnish or two for this week's suppers? Very little, if any at all.

Enjoy the opening of the season and the tender succulent results, but don't be afraid to think outside the box when it comes to supper time; you'd be amazed what goodies you can pick up while out shooting, I often gather the whole meal on the same trip, and you can, too, with a little

While out beating, keep your eyes peeled for nature's edible jewels, such as sloes, rowanberries and rosehips



About Tim Maddams

Tim is a chef, food writer and cookery teacher who lives in Devon. He's been into food from an early age and spent much of his childhood on the family farm in Wiltshire, gleaning a close understanding of farming and fostering a love of the great British countryside, wild food and quality produce, which would form the cornerstone of his culinary ethos. Over the course of his career, Tim has worked under such culinary luminaries as Fergus Henderson, Alistair Little, Marco Pierre White and Mark Hix, as well as leading the VIP catering team for the Ferrari F1 team in Europe. A nagging feeling of unease with the corporate world made Tim yearn for a return to his country roots, so Tim returned to the South

West and started work at River Cottage where he cooked as head chef for over four years and has recently written their *Game* handbook.



A little imagination goes a long way when foraging – even a head or two of maize can be transformed into a tasty treat



planning, a little subterfuge and a little knowledge. One of the easiest wins is wilding apples. Often these trees have grown from the casually discarded cores of beaters' snacks, so you will find apple trees in the most unlikely of places, and the fruit is often excellent. Fill your boots!

Try roasted pheasant with wilding apples; after washing, just pop them into the roasting pan with the pheasant, and once the bird is resting pop them back in the oven until they soften, then scrape them out along with all the good bits at the bottom of the pan and push the pulp through a sieve. This makes an excellent, tart sauce for the tasty pheasant meat, it hasn't cost you a penny,

'I am often pinching a few leaves of kale, or a head or two of maize, but I'm just as happy with a few rape tops or the odd stubble turnip'

SQUASH KETCHUP (SQUETCHUP)

Christmas is coming and I love a seasonal chutney or pickle as much as the next man, but frankly, sometimes, what you really want is a good dollop of ketchup, which, when you think about it, really is just a smooth chutney. Here's a recipe for my seasonal favourite. It works a treat on a venison burger with blue cheese, or even a mallard and smoked bacon burger.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 small pumpkin or butternut squash, peeled, diced and deseeded
- ◆ 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- ◆ 1 chilli
- ◆ ¼ pt cider vinegar
- ◆ 2 tablespoons sugar
- ◆ 1 teaspoon salt
- ◆ Enough water to cover

METHOD

1. Cook all ingredients together in a pan until tender. Remove the liquid and blitz the squash to a paste. Add the liquid back in and reduce on the stove to a ketchup consistency, adjusting the seasoning as needed.
2. Allow to cool, and store for up to a month.

and will stand up well to some sautéed rape tops!

Just don't mention this to the keeper; let's keep it between ourselves...

The gifts that keep on giving

As this is the Christmas issue, what better way to use the fruits of your labour than to make delicious edible gifts to give to your friends? You could have a go at making jellies – such as apple and blackberry, or rowanberry – sloe gin, chutneys, jams... The only limit is your imagination, and your culinary prowess! See the boxouts for a couple of simple, tasty suggestions. Happy foraging! ■

BEETROOT, LEMONGRASS AND CARDAMOM GIN

Too impatient to wait for the sloe gin to be ready? Run out of last year's? Missed the elderberry crop, or just looking for something a little different and less time-consuming? Look no further...

Ready in just two weeks (so plenty of time to do this before Christmas), this infusion is the answer to your prayers – interesting, warming, a bit out of the ordinary, and as welcome in the hip flask as the martini shaker.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 large beetroot, well washed and grated
- ◆ 1 bottle of gin (quality is up to you, but in this instance, cheap and cheerful will be fine)
- ◆ 100g golden caster sugar
- ◆ 1 stem of lemongrass
- ◆ 4 cardamom pods, broken lightly
- ◆ 1 red chilli (optional)

METHOD

Bung it all in the bottle of gin. Reserve any leftover gin to top up the bottle in a fortnight when you sieve out all the bits; at the same time, I often put a new stem of lemongrass and one new cardamom pod in the bottle to keep it fresh. This is not a keeper – it needs drinking this season or, ideally, as soon as possible. Chin chin!

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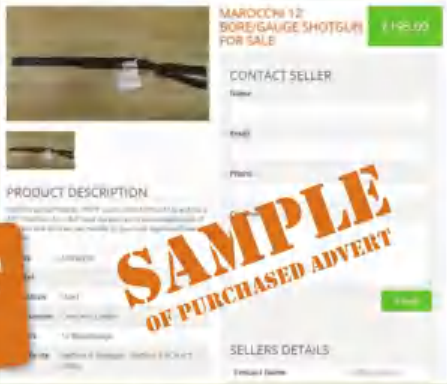


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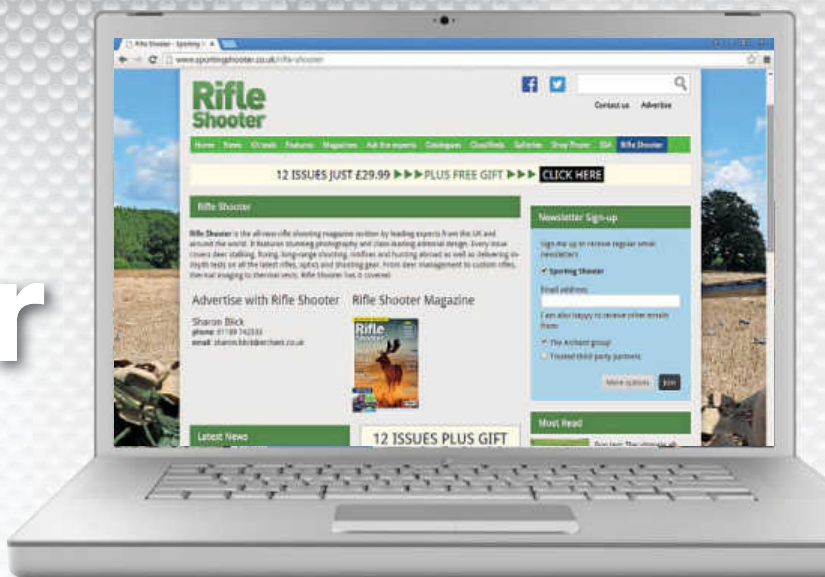
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Build your own trap

If you need to capture an animal without harming it, you're going to need something other than your trusty shotgun, however well it's served you in the past

There are times when you need to catch a bird or animal without dispatching or killing it. This could be to check for disease, to tag, to catch a distressed or injured creature, or to catch a menace for release at a distant location.

This calls for a special type of trap as no harm is to come to the animal. I will be showing you how to build such a trap.

Please note that using this to catch songbirds and badgers, etc, is not legal. Always ensure you are complying with legal guidelines when setting any traps.

It is also worth mentioning that this trap can be built on any scale to catch any animal or bird that can be legally caught. Quite simply, the larger the creature, the larger the set-up required.

I'm going to build a 'figure four cage trap'. Firstly, the trigger mechanism needs to be built, and secondly, we need to build the cage. In this first part, we'll concentrate on the trigger mechanism.

This time, I'm going to build something suitable for catching a squirrel. Before I start building, I need to think about the size of the quarry.

In this case I need to think about the height and length of the squirrel. I'm going for a body height of around 10cm and a body length of 25cm.

The trigger mechanism is made from one long piece of wood. I'm using a bit of straight hazel. I want it to be around five foot long and about an inch thick. I then need to cut it into three 18-inch lengths [pic 1]. There will be a bit left over; but these are approximate lengths, and if you are trapping on soft soil then the thicker end needs to be a couple of inches longer.

Now we need to shape the trigger. First, place the three lengths into a relatively flat, figure '4' shape. The thickest length should be the vertical and the thinnest should be the horizontal. The diagonal length needs to be just short of the end of the horizontal stick and resting on the top of the vertical stick. Each stick must then be shaped at each end:

■ The vertical length needs to be sharpened to a long point on the thin end [pic 2]. The other end needs to have a chisel end.

■ The horizontal length needs to have a one-inch, flat platform cut on the thin end [pic 3], and a bevel on the thicker end.

■ The diagonal length should have a chisel end on one end [pic 4] and a point on the other.

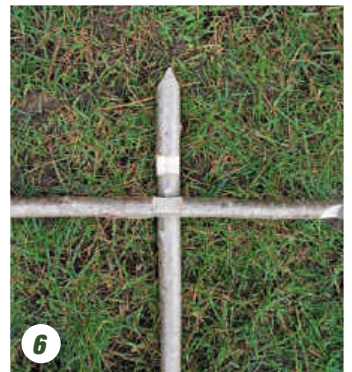
Now we need to cut some square notches. First, place the three lengths back in formation [pic 5], so that you can locate the correct point to carve the notches, which should be as follows:

■ At the point where the horizontal and vertical lengths cross you need to cut a square notch into each stick [pic 6].

■ Where the diagonal length meets the horizontal length you should carve a sloping notch about one inch from the end [pics 7 and 8].

■ The last notch is a simple V-shaped notch where the diagonal meets the vertical length [pic 9]. This completes the trigger mechanism [pic 10].

In the next article we'll have a look at the cage and how to go about setting the trap. ■





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A day to remember

Turn your Boxing Day shoot into a lasting memory by swapping your usual gear for some of Diggory's nostalgia-steeped suggestions

I very much enjoyed the photos on Facebook of Mike Yardley's son and his pals, all dressed in animal onesies and out having jolly capers in the snow on their Boxing Day shoot a couple of years ago. While such undergraduate antics may be a little too much for the average *Sporting Shooter* reader this festive season, it is a not uncommon practice for many a sportsman to keep 'something special' in his cabinet for the Boxing Day shoot.

Boxing Day is ripe for a ramble with the family, the dogs and the old musket. For some of us it is the only time we get to spend a bit of outdoor time with old friends and relations. It seems an appropriate opportunity to do things a bit differently.

Muzzle loaders

If you are minded to really make the day special, bring out the muzzle loaders. Have the whole team, be they walking up the hedges or driving the coverts, bedecked in their top hats and waistcoats with an old Manton or Harkom in hand, loaded with the finest powders, shot and felt wads; and do it the way they did back in the 1840s. Anything you bag is a bonus, and reminds us of how skilful our forebears were with the old guns. It may be the only time you do it all year, but that is what makes it worthwhile.

Black powder

If you can't get the bug for the muzzle loader but still want to make a noise and a display, try black powder; it creates a totally different atmosphere and experience. Just remember to keep the swing going and put on some extra lead. Then smile as you contemplate the end of the drive – the smoke drifting down the line and the dogs scurrying about picking up the fallen birds. It could be 1900 again, just for moment.

Hammer guns

Perhaps the most common nod to this special time of year is the wheeling out of the hammer gun. Away goes the Beretta and out comes the vintage Rigby, resplendent with slightly thin, acid-etched damascus barrels, non-rebound locks and nicely-patented stock, with a proper 1870s wedge profile and steel butt-plate. On a day like this, you should eschew the Musto, dust off the tweeds and team them with a proper hat and leather boots – and you'd better be wearing a tie! Special occasions call for a bit of effort and your old gun will demand some respect.

Something local or familial

The Boxing Day shoot can be a great excuse to



The Boxing Day shoot is a chance to share some time outdoors with friends and family

bring out Grandpa's gun, if you are lucky enough to have it in the family. Even if it doesn't really fit you, or it is a bit battered, why not give a nod to the old-timers and keep that continuity going for another year? With luck, your son or daughter will be holding the very same gun in 40 years and fondly remembering you standing just where you are today, with your cigar going and your feet stamping on the frosty ground, awaiting the first bird of the day.

If you don't have a gun that has been in the family for a generation or two, it can be fun to find one that has your family name on it. This is quite easy if you are a Mr Watson, Grant, Smith or Reilly – all common names in this country and coincidentally the names of quite prolific gunmakers of old. However if, like me, you have a name that is unlikely to be found on any gun ever made, you can go the local route and find something sold in your town; small towns all had gunsmiths and ironmongers selling sporting firearms in the past. Even a little place in Shropshire, like Ludlow, once boasted a gunmaker or two; Smallwood being one that springs to mind.

Whatever route you choose, make Boxing Day something special. Wearing your old kit, carrying a gun you don't normally use and marking the passing of another year in the field with friends and family deserves a little extra effort. These days stand out in the memory long after they have passed and normal life has resumed.

Happy Christmas. ■

Put on your tweeds, grab a cigar and give your old hammer gun an airing



'The most common nod to this special time of year is the wheeling out of the hammer gun'

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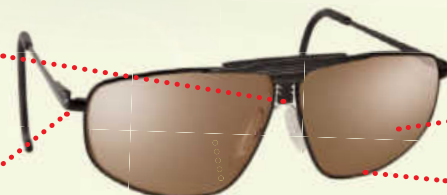
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An unseasonable season

Robin's behavioural observations of the wildlife native to his area do not tally with recent Met Office warnings... Worst winter for 50 years? Robin's still out in his shirtsleeves!

At the beginning of October, the grey geese arrived in their thousands. Now they have sought pastures, or should I say stubbles, new. With this 'new moon' I expected the annual influx of woodcock from Scandinavia, but few, if any, have arrived to swell our native birds, despite Sweden having relatively little snowfall and associated low temperatures. (I have acquired this information from a very attractive young lady whose family have a considerable hunting area in the north of Sweden.)

I met up with an old stalker pal of mine as the stag season was drawing to a close. He commented that the season was quite hard, as the stags were staying far out on the high country.

This was due to the unusually mild and balmy weather he had experienced throughout the season, tending to keep the beasts away, to a degree, to avoid the torment of midges.

The red wings and fieldfares have arrived in penny numbers so far, again probably due to the clement weather in their homeland. Our rowan tree still has a good crop of berries, whereas in previous autumns they would have been stripped by the Viking hordes.

Nevertheless, despite this Indian summer, one of the farms I rent the shooting on still has the best part of 100 acres of barley to cut, and I pen these words as November is two days old. For notwithstanding the unseasonal back end, the

ground is still very boggy in some parts.

To keep myself busy I have been renewing some of my duck hides. I am very fortunate in that I am able to help myself to a substantial supply of pallets. Four or five of them make excellent hides, especially if bedecked with the whin bushes that are prolific around my ponds. I also make sure each hide has a weatherproof notice relating to the cartridge rules that our boffins have, in their wisdom, decided to impose on us.

The Met Office warns us we are in for the worst winter for 50 years; as yet there is little sign of it, for we are still going around in shirtsleeves under a cloudless sky. Most of our grey geese seem to have gone south or east from us. The usual vast skeins do not clamour in our skies night and morning.

This balmy weather we are having up here, I am sure, is affecting the normal behaviour of the roe, especially the does. I am seeing them in the stubble fields after the sun has risen and dried the ground, for there are plenty of green shoots showing through the ageing stubble.

The red hinds, as I indicated earlier, are really far out on the hillside now, resplendent in their winter hues of madders and siennas as the short days of the season take hold. I have a feeling they are making the most of it before the threatened winter arrives. ■



Wild greylag geese arrive in huge numbers in the north at this time of year

'The red hinds are really far out on the hillside now, resplendent in their winter hues of madders and siennas'





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Fact is duller than fiction

Tim makes a well-deserved mockery of the letters written by the League Against Cruel Sports, as they launch a factually-unsupported media hate campaign against pheasant shooting

Game shooters often come under pressure from groups who do not want us to carry on doing what we do. I often get personal abuse on platforms like Twitter just because of who I work for and what I do in my spare time. Unfortunately, the anti-shooting lobby seem to have an awful lot of time on their hands to write blogs, send tweets and create Facebook pages which are usually full of unsubstantiated rhetoric. I am often asked why the shooting lobby don't get as much press as these antis, and the answer is simple – we tend to have a far more balanced view and use actual facts to back up our arguments. That, unfortunately, doesn't make very good reading in your mainstream press. Papers and news outlets want sensationalism. They don't want a story built on dull facts and truths – why would they? It doesn't make very good headlines.

As we came towards the start of the pheasant shooting season there was a massive press campaign, lead by Animal Aid and the League Against Cruel Sports, with letters sent to every local and national paper in the UK condemning pheasant shooting. In one letter, sent to a number of papers by Dr Toni Shephard, who describes herself as 'head of research' for the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS), it was claimed that 40 million gamebirds are released every year only

to be shot by sadistic cowards. She also claimed that gamebirds are factory farmed in appalling conditions and that the releasing of gamebirds has a negative impact on the countryside. Let's take a look at these claims, rationally and properly.

The claim that 40 million gamebirds are released each year is very much at odds with research conducted by BASC, which gave a figure of 15 million fewer. Now, the BASC research is accountable and valid, and they can justify where they got their figures from; the LACS claim, however, is totally unjustified.

With regards to Dr Shephard's claim that gamebirds are reared in appalling welfare conditions, I wonder, then, why the RSPCA have not made any convictions, that I'm aware of, under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which makes it an offence to harm livestock or gamebirds, or to fail to cater to their needs. Again, she has got this absolutely wrong.

Another of Dr Toni Shephard's claims is that game shooting has negative impacts on the environment and on conservation. That is a strange statement, since a survey conducted for the National Gamekeepers' Organisation by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (who are proper scientists), shows that there is a more diverse sample of wildlife on areas with a

gamekeeper than those without. The GWCT's Salisbury Plain project showed the same findings over many years of scientific study and, lastly, the RSPB's Director of Conservation, Martin Harper, who is certainly no friend of shooting sports, is on record as saying: "Shooting can do some fantastic things for our wildlife. There are loads of people doing some great things with shooting at the heart of their land management."

The letters from LACS also stated that the average day's shooting resulted in around 500 birds being slaughtered – wrong again! The average day's shooting across the UK has a bag of around 50 birds, with 97% of that meat going into the human food chain.

The National Gamekeepers' Organisation has written responses to all of the letters in the national and local press, and has published comments on our social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook; the response to this has been positive.

As an organisation, the NGO fights hard to promote and protect gamekeeping and game shooting. We can all help by getting a copy of the *Code of Good Shooting Practice*, and making sure that we all read it, follow it and support it. Let's all do our bit. You can download the code from www.codeofgoodshootingpractice.org.uk

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PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN



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THE ULTIMATE PAIR

With a glittering and rather weighty prize fund, the Ultimate Pair competition has attracted a lot of attention. Let's find out what all the fuss is about...

The tournament

The Royal Berkshire Shooting School's Ultimate One competition hit the headlines last year thanks to the extravagant top prize of a brand-new Range Rover Autobiography. This year, the shooting school has evolved the competition into the Ultimate Pair, with entrants competing to win either a Range Rover Sport Autobiography, donated by Stratstone of Mayfair, or a pair of handmade B25 shotguns from renowned

gunmaker, Browning. This year's prize fund, which is worth in excess of £160,000, also includes a vintage Rolex donated by David Duggan Watches.

Launched on Monday 5 October and running until Saturday 30 January, the idea behind the competition is to continue to raise the aspirational element of shooting. Dylan Williams, Managing Director of RBSS, explains: "By incorporating brands like Browning, Range Rover and Rolex,

and by professionally running such a prestigious competition, we are raising the profile of shooting, which is vitally important. Another factor is that this competition is unique; by definition, many clay shooting competitions don't involve driven targets and certainly don't involve driven targets of such heights, angles and speeds. So, while this is a clay shooting competition, it certainly suits game shooters too, and I absolutely encourage game shots to come and have a go as I think they stand



The stunning Royal Berkshire Shooting Ground will provide the stage for this unique competition

PICTURES: SELENA BARR

a very good chance. Furthermore, many top clay shots these days are also recognised for their game shooting skills, such as Des Sturgess and John Heagren. I would also love to welcome Lord James Percy – whose Linhope partridges are a lot harder than these birds – to have a go, along with the likes of Phil Burt and Peter Schwert.”

The format

The format of the Ultimate Pair is simple, as Robert Cross of RBSS, who designed the layouts and sequence of each element, explains:

“Entrants pay £50 and start by shooting 50 warm-up Sporting birds, 10 birds on each of five stands. [They] then have two attempts at the Challenge, where they shoot at a new sequence of 25 driven birds off our legendary 120-foot high tower, where they can use a maximum of 26 cartridges. The 20 highest scoring individuals on the tower alone will then go through to the final where, if the overall winner shoots 23 or more of the 25 birds, he or she will win either the car or the shotguns. The entrant scoring the highest score out of 100 each week during the qualifiers will also be invited to the final to shoot-off for a vintage Rolex worth over £5,000.”

The tower sequence, once again, takes the form of 25 high birds hand-thrown from six traps, but differs from last year’s event. “The tower is actually a 40 foot-long gantry so this means we can throw a huge range of different styles of targets, so this year’s sequence is completely new,” says Robert. “Hand-throwing the targets means we can send a mix of 90s and standard clays, plus the clays actually go further. The sequence will be the same each time – the only

variant is the weather or the shooter’s performance!”

What does it take to win?

So what does it take to perform well or to win a competition of this nature? Mark Winsor, last year’s winner who shot a perfect 25 ex 25 in the final, but is not allowed to enter this year, believes it is down to concentration and nerve. “There is not a person in the world who would not feel their nerves building up as they progress towards the 25th target. You can’t afford to miss anything; the minute you miss one you’ll get tense and make mistakes. So you need to make use of the space available to you and maximise your footwork as much as possible. You’ve also got to pick a sound technique, and if you want to take on this tower you need to get in lots of practice. My advice is to enter the competition several times so you can memorise the targets and timings.”

John Heagren, shooting manager at Bisley Shooting Ground, who won the competition in its first incarnation as the Stratstone Super Seven Challenge, agrees that shooting the tower



The winner will have the choice of a pair of B25 shotguns or a brand-new Range Rover

A vintage Rolex has been donated by David Duggan



sequence several times is vital. “Being confident on high birds is important, so if you are a game shooter that will help. Another aspect is footwork and being able to read the targets, so you get your feet and shoulders into the correct position. But while the birds are high and fast, pure clay shooters are also in with a great chance of winning as they have the correct mindset to try for perfection and shoot 25 out of 25. Game shooters don’t have to concentrate on 25 birds in a row without stopping, whereas clay shooters are more used to that type of shooting. It is really anyone’s game but, as always, you do also need a little bit of luck on the day.”

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BASC calls for 10-year certificates

BASC fights the case for extended shotgun and firearms licences in a bid to improve the current problematic system. Conor O'Gorman reviews the progress made...

One of BASC's top priorities is making a case for improved firearms licensing across the UK. Our firearms department typically handles over 700 enquiries a month from members seeking expert advice. This staggering number continues to increase, particularly in relation to complaints about poor service and delays in the grant and renewal of firearm and shotgun certificates. While there are some outstanding examples of efficiency in processing renewals, in our experience these are the exception, not the rule.

The underlying problem is that police licensing departments experience peaks and troughs in their workloads caused by the five-year renewal cycle. Many fail to recruit or train new staff in time for the busy periods. This leads to delays in renewing certificates. Shooters facing the prospect of being left in unlawful possession of their firearms can demand temporary permits, but this, of course, puts further pressure on understaffed licensing teams. Also, even temporary permits do not cover items such as expanding ammunition, which causes serious problems for certificate holders who manage wildlife. Understandably, the firearms licensing system has become regarded as dysfunctional by many shooters.

A more serious consequence of the current renewal cycle is that firearms licensing teams tend to shed staff in trough years, resulting in a loss of expertise. This has been recognised by the Home Office as depriving firearms licensing departments of the knowledge and experience vital for making informed public safety assessments. The recently published HMIC report recommended that professional

development arrangements needed to be brought into forces to ensure a more consistent national approach to firearms licensing. The problem has long been recognised by BASC, as well as the police licensing staff and the many tens of thousands of certificate holders who are unfairly affected as a result. It has taken many years of painstakingly slow progress, but we are now starting to see top-level government and police recognition of the problem and meaningful dialogue on a solution.

Modern police intelligence-gathering and -sharing methods mean that the suitability of certificate holders is under constant review. Such advancements in real-time monitoring render five-year renewals unnecessary. The police continue to face heavy budget cuts under austerity. Around 80% of the police budget is staff costs. Phasing in 10-year certificates would smooth workload peaks and troughs, reducing pressure, the need for staff, and allowing the retention of experienced staff within licensing departments.

There are various ways of phasing in 10-year certificates and, after analysis by BASC's business intelligence and firearms teams, we recommend the '50% method'. This involves giving half of renewals five-year certificates and the other half 10-year certificates, continuing until a point (after one full five-year cycle) at which all renewals could be granted 10-year certificates.

BASC has published a white paper to help inform an evidence-based decision making process. The paper, *Extending the duration of Firearm and Shotgun certificates*, was launched in September at a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and

THE 10-YEAR RENEWAL PROPOSAL

The white paper arrives at three recommendations:

- 1) Recognition by government that renewals after five years serve no added benefit to enforcement.
- 2) Recognition by government that phased introduction of ten-year certificates would significantly improve the enforcement of firearms law, bringing benefits to public safety, the police service and to certificate holders by preventing the current peaks and troughs of renewals.
- 3) That ten-year shotgun and firearm certificates be introduced and phased in using the 50% method.

We are close to reaching consensus on the principle of ten-year certificates and now it is down to the political will to get us there.

To download a copy of the BASC white paper, search for 'white papers' on the BASC website: www.basc.org.uk

Conservation, in parliament. Crucially, it includes qualified approval for the extension of the certificate term from Chief Constable Andy Marsh, the national lead for firearms within the National Police Chiefs' Council, who wrote in the paper: "There is an opportunity, with appropriate supporting developments, to deliver 10-year certification without compromising on public safety and, on that basis, I will work towards that end in support of BASC's proposal." ■

'The underlying problem is that police licensing departments experience peaks and troughs in their workloads caused by the five-year renewal cycle'

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HOWARD'S TIP OF THE MONTH:

Banish those burrs!

Before a day in the shooting field or a training session, carefully apply Mane and Tail (found in equestrian shops) to your dog's hairy bits. This will make removing burrs, thistles and debris from the dog's coat much easier. Just

ask Rebecca if she wishes she'd used some on Monty (below)!



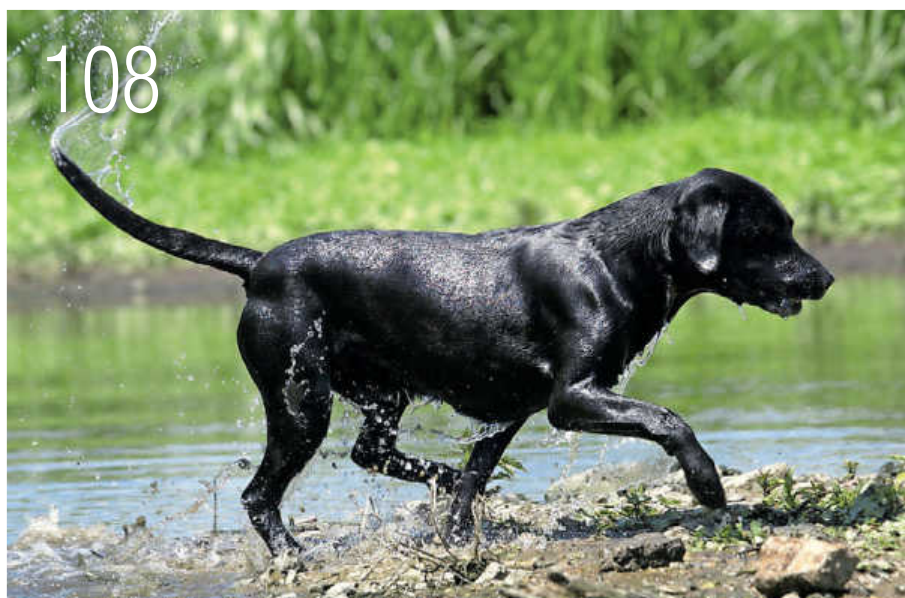
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Flying the flag for GB

Unshakeable team spirit, world-class dogs and a truckload of national pride... Howard's account of the Gundog World Championships makes for a heartwarming, misty-eyed read

Being asked to represent Great Britain with two of my gundogs at the 2015 FCI World Championships, to be held in Serbia, was nothing short of fantastic. It was to be the first time that the Kennel Club had entered a team to this prestigious event, and Team Captain Meryl Ashby began serious preparations way back in 2014.

Team members were selected and informed as to what would need to be in place in order for dogs and handlers to travel: rabies vaccinations and a pet passport, along with a European driving permit, travel and vehicle insurance, sporting insurance, European Firearms Pass and an invitation from the Serbian Hunting Association, allowing us to enter Serbia with guns to hunt. Then all we had to do was ensure that all team dogs

stayed injury free, while making sure they were at the top of their game. All was going well until the Syrian migrant crisis started to make headline news. After endless phone calls and biting of nails, eventually the team calmed a little, and we waited nervously for final travel arrangements to be made. Finally we were on the road! I travelled with Team Vet and fellow competitor, Rob Gould.

Leaving Suffolk at 7pm on Wednesday 28 October, we drove 1,500 miles in 28 hours, through France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia, finally arriving at the Championship HQ in Serbia late on Thursday night.

Friday morning was truly mind-blowing; the hotel was filled with competitors from 28 countries with all the uniforms, personalities, sights, sounds,

languages and dogs that you can imagine. If I'm honest, it was a little intimidating. However, any nerves were soon brushed aside as we prepared for the opening ceremony. Hearing your national anthem played while you parade in uniform with teammates and dogs is something every young dog handler should aspire to. It's something I will never forget.

The programme was set with Championships on Saturday, St. Hubert on Sunday, and Monday hosting the second day of the World Championships. There were separate competitions for setters and pointers and another for the continental HPRs. There were two subgroups for each, labelled *Batterie* one and *Batterie* two and, just like a UK trial, a running order for each. All dogs ran as a brace (two



Howard (second from left) feels honoured to have been part of the first Kennel Club team to be entered into the Championships



Reward him with the Best

running together) and we all huddled around the *batterie* sheets every morning, excitedly looking to see when and with whom we were to run. All pretty straightforward really; all we had to do was ensure that we and the dogs were fed, watered and kitted up ready for the briefing at 8am.

What we now needed to understand was 'Serbian time'. This was something that became predictably unpredictable. In a nutshell, 'be at the briefing at 8am' meant just that, but then be prepared to wait around while nothing seemed to happen. Just as you were starting to lose the will to live, a horn would sound and all hell would break loose.

Briefings were fast and furious. With approximately 150 handlers to brief and dispatch to four different hunting grounds, you needed to have your 'listening ears' on. Sometimes in Italian, sometimes in Serbian and, every once in a while, in English, your name was called and your *batterie* was told to jump into your vehicles. In our case:

"Follow the white Renault Megane!" Well, that's what Rob and I heard, anyway, and in our enthusiasm to get going we rushed to the 4x4. Unfortunately, 30 seconds after we left, the head of briefing announced there had been a mistake: "*Batterie* one, DO NOT follow the white Renault Megane." It was too late. Rob and I were all over that little Renault. After three hours of desperate phone calls, endlessly driving down every motorway, lane and track in Southern Serbia, we were located by a Serbian hero who got us to our allocated hunting ground before we were

'All of the GB dogs put in a sterling performance, which wasn't easy; the partridges were there, but the dogs had to work hard to find them'

TEAM MEMBERS

Meryl Asbury (Team Captain)

Maddy Raynor

Sara Chichester

Geoff Saint

Mark Clifford

Rob Gould

Howard Kirby

required. At no time did I burst into tears, but believe me, the thought of missing out on my first run at the World Championships brought this man close to crying. Team Captain Meryl – you saved our skins.

Our vehicles were parked alongside a dual carriageway from where we had an excellent view of each brace as they competed. Each brace ran for 10 minutes hunting the famous Serbian wild grey partridges. The ground was a patchwork quilt of Serbian agriculture made up of maize, cabbages, chillis, stubble and waste ground, on which lurked a sharp-spined sticky burr that clung determinedly to our long-coated dogs. We quickly learned that the best way to deal with this was to clip hair, where possible, and rub olive oil into their coats.

I defy any dog handler not to be impressed by the drive and power that is so obvious the first time you watch one of these dogs in action. German shorthaired and wirehaired pointers, Brittany spaniels and a few German longhairs quartered the ground at a blistering pace, sometimes taking in a beat up to 200 yards wide in each direction. Watching the pointing dog's ability to locate and turn into a point from full gallop is one of life's pleasures, and these world-ranking dogs confirmed this.

Day one was dry and overcast, nice and cool with a gentle breeze – nice conditions for dog

work. Whenever possible, dogs were run into the wind. Each brace ran for 10 minutes. Dogs were cast off and the first minute of hunting was classed as a warm-up period, after which a horn was sounded. Any action during this first minute was not taken into account. All of the GB dogs put in a sterling performance, which wasn't easy; the partridges were there, but the dogs had to work hard to find them. Once a dog located game and came on-point, the dog would then be asked to flush and be steady to shot. This shot was a salute as no game was killed for this trial. Brace dogs had to either 'back up' the point, if they happened to be hunting in the same area, or sit to shot after a flush. Both dogs were then picked up and handlers returned to the judges before changing sides and resuming hunting. At the end of each run – if all had gone to plan – a shot was fired and the judges threw out a dead bird which the dog then retrieved. Of particular note were performances by Maddy Raynor with her Irish setter, Ginger, and Rob Gould with his German longhaired pointer, Dyjnn, both of whom were taken to the water and asked to make a retrieve to complete their day. A great start, with two GB dogs receiving awards.

Evenings were spent looking after the dogs, with lots of de-burring, followed by an evening in the hotel. The language barrier was always the biggest challenge for us; I so wish I was multilingual. Fortunately, a lot of the other

Howard casts off FTCh Wamilanghaar Tash of Mullenscote



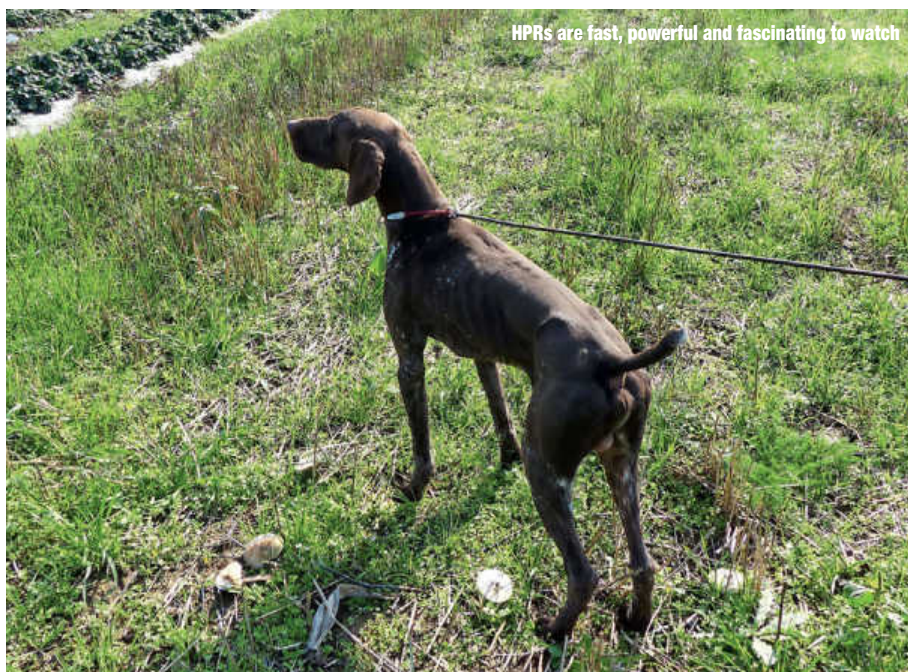
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The dogs covered large areas of ground so it was essential that competitors kept up with the trial



HPRs are fast, powerful and fascinating to watch

countries' teams spoke English, so we were able to communicate. Failing that, a lot of smiling and gesticulating got us through most conversations. The wealth of knowledge, experience and opinion among such a large gathering of top handlers was vast. Whenever possible the talk was about dogs... I loved it!

I was fortunate to spend an hour with the President of the FCI, Peter Bahlke, a most charming and informed man. We discussed many things, and at one point he said, "In the UK, you hunt not to miss; in Europe, we hunt to find." By this he meant that the relative abundance of game in the UK means that we put more control on our dogs to avoid missing game, whereas in Europe game is less abundant, and so dogs need to be given their heads a bit more and get out that bit further. In my opinion, it is this significant difference that has developed the hunting and, particularly, the competing styles that differentiate us.

Day two was programmed for a competition called the St. Hubert. This was very different to the previous day. "You must think theatre; go out

and give the judges a display of your hunting skills," said Tommy Lundgren, a very helpful and charismatic Swedish competitor. Fellow teammate, Mark Clifford and I competed in the spaniel class. When required, the steward collected you and took you down to meet the judges. After handshakes you were then expected to introduce yourself and your dog, and discuss your choice of gun and cartridges (each competitor needed to carry six), before confirming what game was allowed to be shot; our brief was cock and hen pheasants. Next, you presented your gun to the judges for inspection. Finally, they checked that you had the correct hunting licences and insurance before directing you to your allocated beat. Let the show begin! Twenty minutes of hunting heavy brambles in searing midday temperatures made life tough for all of the dogs. Mark's English springer and my cocker worked their hearts out, finishing exhausted and bloodied. Unfortunately, both of us had blank runs – no game. Gutted doesn't really describe the feeling, but neither of us cried (not publicly

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anyway). Team spirit was high, however, and once again the HPRs along with the setters and pointers had flown the flag and all put in good performances.

Day three, and by now we knew our way around, had made friends, and learned how to say 'good morning' in numerous foreign languages (test me if you like!). The whole team looked more relaxed and settled in. *Allez!* Go! Hurry up! Here we go again – dogs, briefings, and a one-hour rally drive to the hunting grounds.

It was the second day of World Championships. The early dogs got two important ingredients: cool temperatures and game. By midday, the opposite was true. This is a tough and bitter pill to swallow, but that's trialling. Once again, Rob Gould and Dyjnn were awesome and a point and flush on partridges on open ground saw them set for a second award. At the water, Rob and Dyjnn shone again; following their first-class water retrieve the judges called for them twice more. "*Angletera*," a judge shouted sarcastically, insisting Rob return to retrieve the duck that the last dog had failed on. Twice more he was called in, each time to a rapturous round of applause from handlers that had travelled from all over the world. Dyjnn put on a show; a slight, fast and gentle-mannered German longhaired bitch, she proved that she's world class as she slid silently into the water and put on a beautiful demonstration of water retrieval. The atmosphere at the water on that last day was something I am honoured to have been part of – hard-hunting ladies and gentlemen from around the world enjoying the theatre, spectacle and camaraderie that this amazing Gundog World Championships created. Rob and Dyjnn finished sixth overall – what an achievement. He was overjoyed, as was the rest of the team, albeit in a reserved, British kind of way.

This was the first time that the Kennel Club had sent a team to this competition and, for sure, Team GB were nothing short of first-class ambassadors. It's essential that we continue to attend – let's be honest, why wouldn't we?! There are differences in the way we work our dogs to the rest of the world, and any of you that are foolish enough to think that we, or our systems, are superior to theirs, then shame on you. Go and watch, work hard... maybe you'll be selected for the team. Your horizons will be broadened; there's the opportunity to see and learn so much. I personally had the time of my life.

That was *the* Gundog World Championships I took part in. Wow! I've only just stopped pinching myself. ■

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Ryan Kay is a keen trialler and trainer with a passion for working HPRs and spaniels. He beats and picks up on various moors in North Yorkshire and enjoys rough shooting with his dogs.

To beat, or not to beat – part 2

Ryan continues his guide to going beating with an in-depth look at where best to place your dog in the line; age, breed and experience are all deciding factors

So, you've managed to find some beating. You've been a couple of times (without your dog) and sussed out the lay of the land, so to speak – what's needed, what's acceptable and what will suit your dog. As I mentioned last month, if you're happy for your dog to just run about and knock birds up, way out in front, and the keeper's happy for this also, then by all means, crack on. But please don't take it on a different shoot the next week, where things are a little more in order, and then expect it to behave perfectly!

The melee of dogs on some shoots can be one of the hardest things to put up with, and dogs careering about, way in front, easily distract and encourage a young dog to follow suit.

Don't take a dog beating until it is two years old

This could, to some extent, be true; but, as I mentioned last month, it's not that black and white. In the past, I've had the opportunity to introduce a six-month-old forward-going pup to a nice, quiet drive, near the back end of the season – that's measured and monitored control on the appropriate ground! The young dog was kept back a little out of the way, and looked after. We've talked about gentle exposure and how we can go about achieving this, and we've also mentioned looking out for particular areas on a shoot that will get the best out of your dog. It doesn't matter what age you set for your dog's

first beating experience – it could be 10 months or five years old – but if it's not responding in a boring environment and you haven't built the excitement gradually, then you can't expect the brakes to work in a testing one!

The beating line goes too fast!

If you're rough shooting or trialling with a dog, then the dog needs to flush in shooting range. Not only does this aid the shooting, but hunting it at the correct distance will ensure you don't miss anything to flush. In my opinion, it should be no different when beating. Far too many shoots hurriedly run their beaters through the woods rather than covering them properly. The reality is

TOP TIP

If the beating line is moving too fast, intersperse short bursts of hunting with some heelwork; the hunting is then the reward.



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

that the beating line goes too fast and this encourages your dog to take a larger 'bite' of ground, and forge forward when quartering. So what do you do? I try to use this as an obedience opportunity at keeping control. Run your dog as you would in an ideal situation, keeping him at the correct distance. After a minute or two you'll notice you're perhaps just behind the line. Bring your dog in to heel and then catch up, before casting him off again. When beating down a block of woodland, the line can be a bit skew-whiff anyway, due to folk getting caught up in the odd bramble, for example; by bringing him in to heel, you've asked him to focus more on you again. Then, by giving him the short bursts of hunting, he's getting a reward to do his favourite thing once more. This enhances your control over your dog, allowing him less time to potentially switch off and perhaps go solo. Remember, this could be something you've cleared with the keeper beforehand, but really it shouldn't be that noticeable anyway. Of course I realise that during the catch up, with your dog at heel, you could also miss game, but so could the dogs that are pulling forward!

Don't let your dog off in maize!

You can't see your dog when it's in a field of maize, but your dog can see everything! Maize is often one of the cover crops that brings out the worst in a beating dog. It encourages it to switch from using its nose to using its eyes more. I've witnessed dogs that have quickly deteriorated week after week – as far as their obedience is concerned – and who can blame them given the constant exposure to maize? The dog soon learns to run forward in search of gathering birds to chase, and actually ends up sending birds out everywhere. I hate the stuff! Dogs that can see lots of game running-on in front will be tempted to give pursuit. Plus, the excitement this will cause to some young dogs may encourage them to make a noise, resulting in yipping and barking. Seriously, get down and look through the maize stems, so you can see it from a dog's perspective... lots of birds rushing about! If you can see that many birds, what do you need a dog for? I appreciate that some pressure needs to be put on some young birds and first time or reluctant flyers, but why not start cracking those flags instead?

'The reality is that the beating line goes too fast and this encourages your dog to take a larger 'bite' of ground, and forge forward when quartering'



Rough foliage along the banks of a stream can be an ideal spot to work an HPR

PICTURES: RYAN KAY

Beating with an HPR

HPRs are generally best used for picking-up on the majority of shoots, as this is where they can really contribute. That's not to say that they can't be useful in the beating line, too, but there are a few things to consider here. First, do you want

your HPR to 'point'? And more importantly, 'hold the point'? If so, then you need to look carefully at your beating opportunities. Smart spaniels and Labs will soon catch on to an HPR 'on point', realising there's game present before flying in to flush it. If you allow this to continue, that point will



HPRs can cover a large amount of ground in a short space of time, so keep them focused on a suitable area of cover



PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN

‘Smart spaniels and Labs will soon catch on to an HPR ‘on point’, realising there is game present before flying in to flush it’

soon diminish as your HPR will start to creep and flush the bird itself, before another dog gets to it. This, of course, is fine if that’s what you want. But if you’re wanting your dog to hold that point, because you either enjoy rough shooting or trialling, then you need to think differently. Remember, HPRs are all about trying to find those odd one or two birds, and so areas of cover with a high population of game generally won’t suit them. So for this reason, I try to choose my areas to work my HPRs, and these are often on the peripherals of the beating line. Here, I can sometimes hunt them flatter and wider, so they’re not funnelled forward, as they may be in the middle of the line. This way I can hopefully protect the training progress of the dog and keep it away from flushing spaniels. HPRs, of course, are also often suited to different ground compared to spaniels and Labs, and this needs to be in your thoughts when choosing a spot in the line. In a HPR field trial, hedgerows can feature quite a lot, perhaps with a bit of rough grass along one side, or maybe rough foliage along a stream. These areas, I find, are ideal and I can keep a dog busy

If you can finish your day’s beating with a nice retrieve, then so much the better



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

by sending it continuously over a dyke or stream, enabling it to cover both sides and keep in touch with me. I say this because one of the hardest things about working an HPR in the beating line is how fast they can cover the ground, and unless you can keep them busy in an area of suitable cover, you’ll find yourself constantly on the whistle, pipping the dog back in.

As I’ve said several times, the spoken terms and rules of beating with a young dog are not by any means black and white; the circumstantial variations from one shoot to the next can differ enormously. To set a scale, one end would be a large commercial shoot with so many birds that the only use for a dog would be as part of the picking-up team; at the other end would be a small

syndicate shoot where good dogs in the beating line are indispensable. Wherever your beating opportunities lay on this scale, you must use your own common sense and try to recognise what will suit you and your dog.

In the end, you’ve trained hard to get where you are and you’ve hopefully built a good partnership; a perfect day is one where your dog has worked earnestly and listened well. We all look for that opportunity to show that the hard work has paid off, and when a Gun calls to you, as you appear from the end of the wood, to help him find a bird, there’s the opportunity to finish the whole job off. The dog is sent out and the bird is found with minimal effort, before bringing it nicely to hand. That’s when you know it was all worthwhile. ■



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Coming off the whistle

Q My spaniel has been hunting really well but has recently started to ignore the whistle and is pulling away from me. I'm worried it's all about to go really wrong.

A HOWARD KIRBY replies: Well done for recognising the problem quickly. Go back to establishing the basics. Find a nice, open piece of ground with light cover and ideally a fence along one side. This fence will help you to ensure you are accurate in the width of the pattern

you want the dog to hunt. Once you start him hunting, keep the dog close, pipping him on the whistle when you want him to turn. Be consistent; the first time the dog ignores the whistle go to him quickly, growling at him. If he has been well schooled in early training he will recognise that you are unhappy. Slip a lead on to him and give him a sharp check while repeating the whistle command. Timing is crucial; if you get it right he will quickly understand that you won't tolerate him ignoring the whistle. Be vigilant and he will soon learn what you want from him.



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Reluctant to release

Q My lurcher caught and retrieved his first rabbit, but growled when I went to take it. Of course I smacked his head and he let go. How do I stop him being dominant?



PICTURES: NICK RIDLEY

A JACKIE DRAKEFORD replies: This isn't dominance, and please never smack him again, because you will stop him retrieving and ruin your teamwork. A first rabbit is important to a dog, and some are reluctant to hand it over initially.

When he catches next, don't take the rabbit, but put his lead on and let him carry it for a little way until he starts to find it heavy. Then hold a tasty reward above his nose while taking hold of the rabbit from underneath, and as he opens his mouth for the reward, gently slip the rabbit out and put it in your pocket. Reward again, then encourage him to look for another rabbit. Soon he will readily give them to you.

Stud fears

Q Will using my male dog at stud change his behaviour? He has such a good character at the moment, I don't want him to change, but I'd like to breed from him.

A VICKY PAYNE replies: It is hard to predict how using a dog at stud will change a dog's behaviour. Many dogs combine stud duties with work and competition without any problems, but others become distracted from their work, or may even become aggressive with other dogs. Problems are more likely if a dog is already struggling with concentration, or has already shown competitive tendencies towards other dogs. To limit the risk of problems, I like to be in control of my dog during mating; I allow him to cover a bitch, just as I allow him to go for a retrieve. After a mating, I take my males out for a walk or some training together and keep an eye on them for a couple of days.





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GUNDOG HEALTH: NOSE TO TAIL

Tails of woe

There's no happier sight than a working dog; its head buried deep in a scent, tail a joyful blur. As owners, it's our duty to keep those tails healthy...

Gundog tails are usually a pleasure to see; wagging away, letting us know how much they enjoy their work. But gundog tails are at risk of injury, both at work and in the kennel. Spaniels, some HPR breeds, and some working terriers have traditionally been docked as puppies to reduce the risk of tail damage. Although docking has been banned in the UK, exemptions apply in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for dogs of specified breeds or types intended for work.

'Recurrent damage to the tail tip can leave it constantly swollen and painful, and amputation of the tail may be the only cure'

Where a breeder can supply the required evidence, that the puppies are likely to be kept or sold for working, a vet must dock them before they exceed five days old. Many vets don't offer a docking service anymore so, if you are planning a litter, finding a vet who will should be a priority. After docking you will be supplied with a certificate, which should be passed on with the puppy, and docked pups must be identified with a microchip.

If you have an older, undocked spaniel or HPR pup, you can't ask a vet to amputate the tail, unless there has been significant damage to it. Dogs working in thick cover are at the highest risk of tail-tip injuries, and though some dogs will work full-tailed for their entire career without problems, many others will get injured. Trimming long hairs can help, but always leave enough hair to cover and protect the tail. Bandaging with sports strapping (or electrical tape) or applying a Dog End allows some dogs to avoid further injury. Spaniels and HPRs aren't the only gundogs at risk of tail-tip injuries. Retrievers can suffer from 'happy tail', which is damage to the tail tip from



Prevention is better than cure when it comes to protecting the tip of the tail

PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN

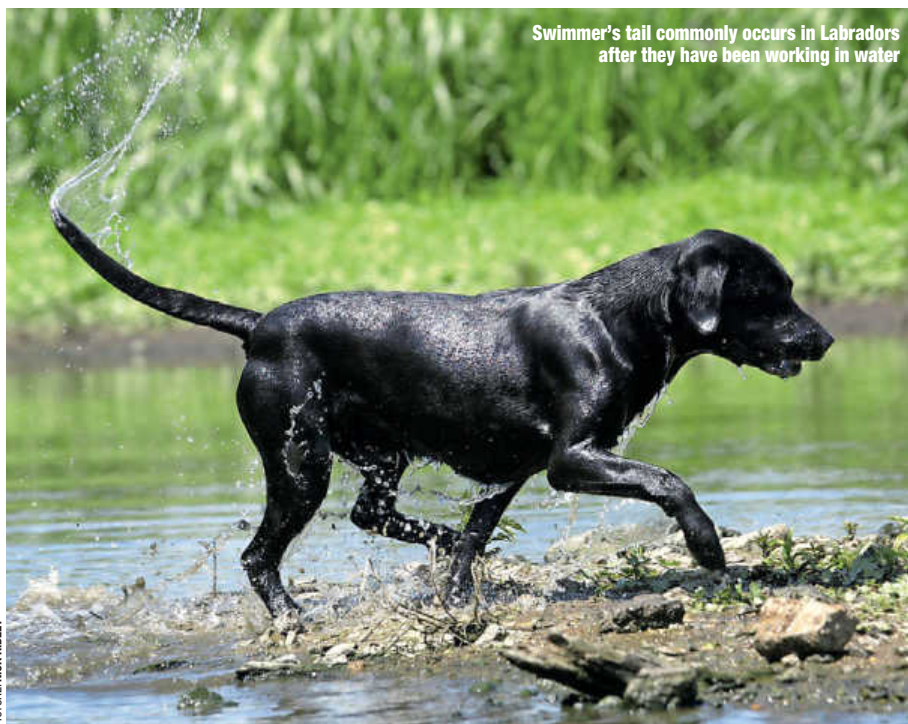
wagging it repeatedly against a hard surface, such as a kennel wall. Recurrent damage to the tail tip can leave it constantly swollen and painful, and amputation may be the only cure. Amputating an adult dog's tail is a major operation, and healing can take some time. If such a thing occurs and this is the only treatment option for your dog, expect him to be out of action for four to six weeks, and expect a shorter tail than the traditional puppy dock.

Another rather poorly understood tail problem is cold tail (also known as limber tail, dead tail, swimmer's tail, and no doubt others I haven't heard of!). The main symptom is a tail that won't wag. The tail will hang; the dog won't wag; and handling of the tail may be painful. It is often seen in Labradors after water work and may be caused either by the tail getting sprained or by the circulation shutting down (like a chilblain). Even vets might panic and think that the tail is broken or the dog has a spinal problem, if they haven't seen it before, but all that most cases require is warmth, rest, and perhaps some pain killers. Using a drying rug after water work and feeding ginger to dogs prone to cold tail might help prevent attacks.

Chewing at the tail base can be a sign of fleas, worms, or overfull anal glands, while a bald patch on the top third of the tail is often an overactive skin gland. As this condition is seen mostly in older, entire males, it is given the name stud tail and, although unsightly, does not usually require treatment.

So, keep a close eye on your dog, take some precautionary measures when out in the field, and let's keep those tails wagging! ■

Swimmer's tail commonly occurs in Labradors after they have been working in water



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

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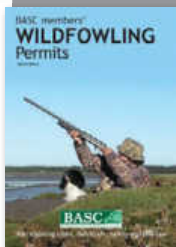
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Last chance for young shots to win car in TSC Winter Series

The final day of the The Schools Challenge (TSC) Winter Series, on 21 December, marks the last chance for young shots to qualify for the final and bag the top prize of a Vauxhall Corsa worth £15,000.

To qualify for the final, shooters must have competed in at least four of the seven qualifying competitions, from which their four best scores are added together to determine their qualifying score. The competitors with the 30 highest total scores from the qualifying rounds will go on to compete in the final for a chance to win the car.

Second to fifth places also present generous prize funds with, in descending order, a Browning 725 shotgun, a Rizzini Premier shotgun and two Bowman Auto Traps up for grabs.

The final will be broken up into two parts. The semi-final will see all 30 qualifiers shooting a 50-bird Sporting competition, with the five top-scoring entries going through to the sudden-death Flash Final. This will take the form of a Sportrap layout where shooters will shoot-off in order to determine placing and those all-important prizes.

The competition is new to 2015 and is open to any young shot in full-time education aged 21 or under on the date of the final.



PICTURE: OXFORD GUN COMPANY

CREATURE FINDERS



WE FOUND LUCINDA LAPWING ON P64 OF THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

John Ahearn, Ire • Philip Kent, Lincs • Jim Morgan, Caithness • Melanie Hendry, Scotland • Charles O'Connor, Ire • Wayne Davison, Bedlington • Wendy Berry, Staffs • John Carroll, Merseyside • Lloyd Mucculloch, Scotland • Stephen Morris, Bristol • Douglas and James Crosby, Cambs • Paul Berry, Staffs • Sharon Davies, Waricks • Alfie Hollingsworth, Wellington • Mrs R Tattershall, Barnsley • Ewan Whyte, Moray • Becki Cathro, Moray • Eddie Finney, Staffs • Bobby Samuel, Staffs • Nigel McNeil-Smith, I.O.W • Abi Thorn, Powys • Tom Jones, Carmarthen • Shrodinger, Essex • Steven Stroud, Suffolk • Kimonie Sturgeon, Suffolk • Jim, Lincs • Martin Cowan, Milton Keynes • Phil Hunnisett, Wilts • Pat Chambers, Lincs • Ian Hall, Notts • Laura Coathup, Worcs • Paul Barnes,

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RBSS has allocated two of its eight full-time instructors, Steve Turner and Peter Wilkins, to RUCPSC and will provide use of shotguns and tuition in English Sporting clay shooting each week.

After agreeing the sponsorship, RBSS ran an open day at its grounds near Pangbourne in Berkshire and welcomed over 50 Reading University students keen to try clay pigeon shooting,

many of whom had never held a gun before.

Sam Gosling, Chair of RUCPSC, commented: "Thanks to RBSS's generous sponsorship our members can now experience the very best in tuition at its superb facilities."

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LINCOLNSHIRE

ANCHOLME VALLEY CLAY TARGET CLUB
Kirton Lindsey Airfield. ESK, SKD, DTL, ABT, Sporting. Tel: (01777) 818362 ancholme-valley-ctc.org.uk

GRIMSTHORPE ESTATE SG
nr Eden-ham. Sporting. Tel: (01778) 591128

HAVEN CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
Haven Bank, New York, LN4 4XR. Enquiries to Graham Fordham 0785422175. 30-bird Sporting, DTL, family days, friendly club. Visit haventcpc.webs.com for shooting dates.

LINCS CLAY CLUB
Church Lane, South Clifton, Nr Lincoln. Lincolnshire NG23 7AW, www.linccsclub.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE SHOOTING GROUND
Sutton Bridge. Sporting, Skeet, ABT, Sportrap, tower, tuition, restaurant, corporate. Tel: (01406) 359300/ (01945) 700622 www.shooting4you.co.uk

PINEWOOD SHOOTING GROUND
nr Gainsborough. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, OT, D/T, Compact. Tel: (01427) 628900. www.pinewood-sg.fsnet.co.uk

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STILEHOLLOW SHOOTING SCHOOL
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NORTHAMPTON SHOOTING GRND
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BRIDGNORTH & DISTRICT GUN CLUB
nr Wolverhampton. DTL. Tel: (01562) 883092

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KINGSLEY MOOR SG
nr Alton Towers. Sporting. Tel: (01782) 550371

LEEK & DGC
Sporting. Tel: (01538) 386127

QUARNFORD SHOOTING GROUND
nr Leek. Sporting. Tel: (01298) 22204

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1

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3

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7

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9

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14

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18

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21

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22

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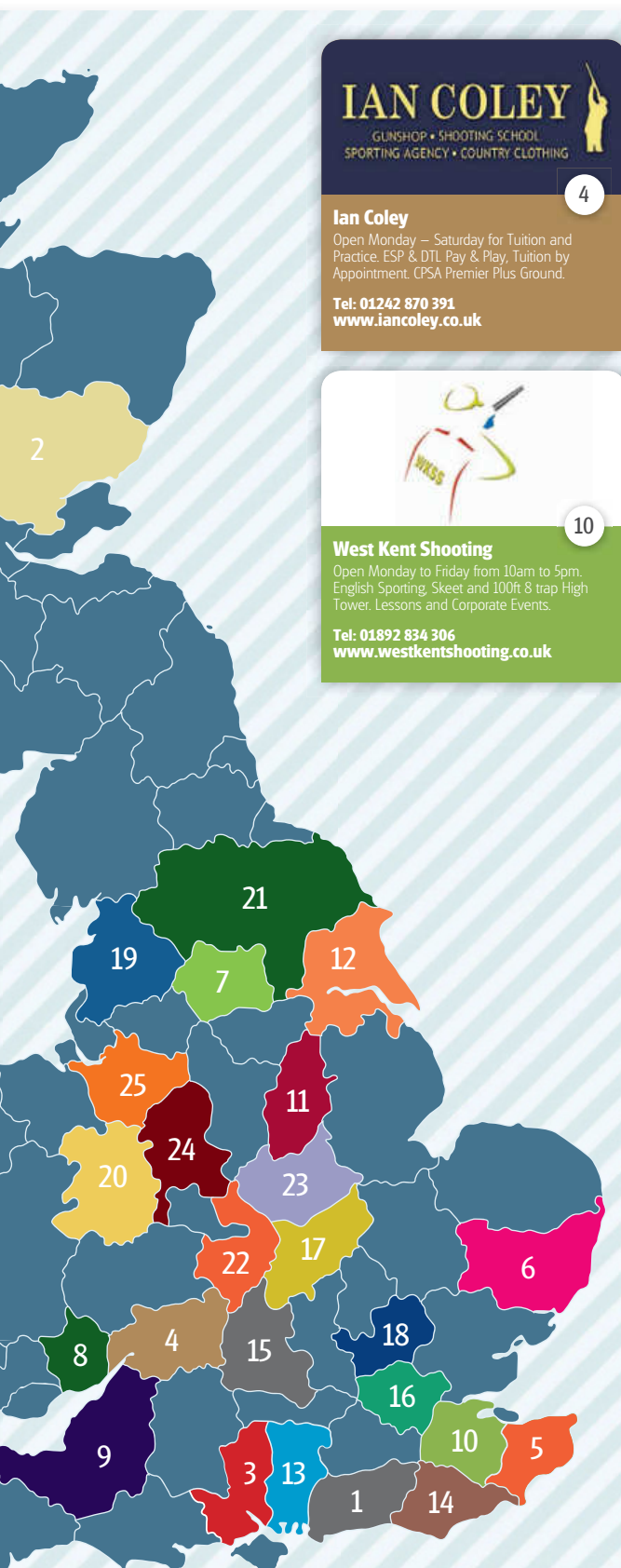
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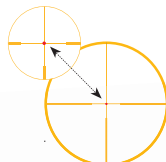
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